

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: May 12, 2025
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

- The Town Council's adopted FY 2025/26 budget will be acted on at the annual Town Meeting being held tomorrow (Tuesday, 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 was made available on the Town's website immediately after the Town Council adopted the Town Manager's proposed budget on April 24. The Town also surface-mailed the annual "A Citizen's Budget Guide" – a document that contains detailed summary information on the adopted budget – 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 was held on May 1 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 was held on Tuesday, May 6, 2025 and the Board of Education's adopted FY 2025/26 budget was approved by the voters. Although a majority of voters in Willington did not vote in favor of the budget, a majority of the voters in Mansfield and Ashford did. In Mansfield, the annual budget referendum for Regional School District 19 enjoyed larger than usual turnout with a total of 261 voters (recent historical turnout is between 140-170). The budget passed in Mansfield with 223 in favor and 38 against.
- With the benefit of regular updates being provided by members of our local state legislative delegation as well as partner state/regional entities – including the CT Council of Small Towns (COST), the CT Convention of Municipalities (CCM), and the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) – Town officials continue to actively monitor pending/enacted legislation of importance to municipalities during current legislative session. In addition to reporting that things are looking very promising for the Town to receive levels of State Aid at least commensurate with what Governor Lamont included in his proposed biennial budget, I would offer a few updates on legislation of interest related to commercial/residential development and affordable housing:
 - [SB 1252](#) – Enabling legislation. The Governor's proposal provides incentives to cities and towns to establish priority housing incentive zones (PHIZ) within their communities. PHIZ must encompass 10% of the towns developable land and be approved by the Department of

Housing. If approved then, a town will gain points towards their 8-30g moratorium. Key provision is if a town has an established zone it would allow for three- and four-unit developments as of right.

- [SB 1263](#) – Referred to House Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding - Would require the Department of Housing Commissioner to establish a tax credit voucher program for the conversion of commercial property to residential by January 1, 2026. The credit would be 10% of the total amount of the expenditure to convert the property.
- [HB 6960](#) – House Floor – Would require the Office of Policy and Management to administer a program to provide grants-in-aid to municipalities for costs related to the construction, improvement and expansion of public infrastructure associated with the construction of certain dwellings and housing that are subject to affordable housing deed restrictions.
- 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. Additional information will be shared at tonight's 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. On-campus interviews with finalists have been completed and the Search Committee will be convening its last anticipated meeting this week to confer and prepare a formal recommendation for the administration's consideration. 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.
- At its February 24 meeting, the Council received a staff presentation regarding Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services' current services and billing protocols. It was explained that the Department currently bills for several services, including EMS standbys and medical transports. Recent state regulations now permit agencies to bill for additional services, including lift assists, motor vehicle accidents, hazardous material spills, and nuisance alarms. The Town Manager and Fire Chief have reviewed these existing programs to ensure rates are set appropriately. The Council has been presented with a series of proposed modifications to both the Department's existing fee schedule and collection efforts for overdue payments that it will consider as part of the Consent Agenda for the May 12 business meeting.
- *Municipal Facilities Master Planning:* As was previously reported to Council, 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) and in-person interviews with qualified firms recently took place. We have identified a preferred firm and are working to develop a final scope of work and corresponding agreement for services to continue moving the effort forward as soon as possible. The work will primarily be completed throughout the remainder of the current calendar year. This important project will be funded in large part via a \$250,000 Community Investment Fund (CIF) planning grant from the State of Connecticut.
- *Storrs Road Multi-Use Trail Funding:* With assistance from Town staff, the Town Manager is actively coordinating with Congressman Courtney's senior staff to update letters of support from key stakeholders in order for the Congressman to resubmit the Town's request for additional federal funding (member-directed/earmark funding) to enable construction of a 10-ft wide multi-use trail that would extend from Tower Loop Road to the Four Corners following a 0.8-mile segment of the CT-195/Storrs Road. Construction of this trail is of great importance to ensure pedestrian safety along this heavily-traveled corridor. With support from Congressman Courtney, the Town was able to secure \$1 million in federal funds for this project, and an additional \$2 million is needed (which will be

- paired with \$600,000 in local/Town matching funds to enable a total project budget (inclusive of design and engineering services, permitting, etc.) of approximately \$3.6 million.
- *Four Corners Pedestrian Safety (The Standard and The Villages)*: As a reminder to the Council, 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, Town officials/staff 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.
 - *HR/Hiring/Updates*:
 - Erin Williams will begin work as our Youth Services Librarian on May 27, 2025. Erin is currently serving as a Youth Services Librarian in another CT municipality. She has five years of experience in both the public library and school library settings. Erin recently completed her Master of Library and Information Science and she has a Bachelor of Arts in English with a Writing Concentration. Erin demonstrated tremendous enthusiasm, extensive experience, and dedication to public service throughout the interview process. Welcome Erin!
 - Staff recently participated in customer service de-escalation training. The training was provided through our Employee Assistance Provider, United Services. The sessions were well attended by staff.
 - *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. The deadline to submit written comments on the draft plan was April 28, 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). At this meeting, the Commission and the Town Council will consider adoption of the plan. If adopted, the plan's goals, actions, and strategies will be incorporated into the 2025 Mansfield Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD). 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, participants will be entered to win one of several \$25 gift cards to spend at a local business. At this time, more than *1,300 responses have been received*. 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.
 - *McDonald's Redevelopment*: On May 19, 2025, the Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on a special permit and site plan

MANSFIELD TOMORROW PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Mansfield Plan of Conservation & Development's update is now underway

The Plan of Conservation and Development outlines Mansfield's vision for the future. The Town is in the process of updating the Plan to respond to current needs and issues.

Participate in the community survey NOW!

Visit MansfieldTomorrow.org to learn more

application for the redevelopment of McDonald's, located at 118 Storrs Rd (PZC File 817-2). The application includes demolishing the existing building, parking, and landscaping areas in order to construct a new, smaller 3,900 square foot restaurant building with associated parking, landscaping, and lighting improvements. The applicant proposes to commence the work in June, with completion anticipated in early September. No operational changes associated with this redevelopment are proposed. After the construction, the restaurant will continue operating 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. The applicant's submission notes that during the busiest times of year, there are an average of 1,215 patrons, with peak times reaching 1,700 and slower summer months at 900. Of these totals, 72% utilize two (2) existing drive-thrus, 18% dine in, and 10% are for delivery pick up (Uber Eats, Door Dash, etc). No public comment can be received after the close of the public hearing.

- On May 1st, key stakeholders participated in a community resilience planning workshop as part of the Town's effort to achieve Gold-level designation by SustainableCT. Many thanks to the core team that participated in planning this event and its related work: Maria Capriola, Adam Libros, Rebecca Stanton, Jessica St. Louis, Lynn Stoddard, and Virginia (Ginny) Walton
- *Mansfield Parks & Recreation Summer Brochure*: The summer brochure was mailed to all Mansfield homes this past week and is available online [here](#).
- Parks and Recreation staff of actively planning for summer camps, programs, and services. Several camp and other summer positions remain available and can be viewed on the Town of Mansfield Human Resources [job openings](#) web page.
- Mansfield Park & Recreation is promoting "National Water Safety Month" during the month of May with education resources and a calendar of activities.
- *Visual Arts and Lenard Hall*: The Mansfield Arts Advisory Committee Annual Juried Art Show display dates at the Mansfield Community Center is May 17 – June 28. Open Studio Space for Artists at Lenard Hall continues every Tuesday until June 22, 5:00-7:00pm. All skill levels are welcome.
- The Mansfield Public Library (MPL) staff team is hard at work planning another wonderful Summer Reading program for kids, teens, and adults.
- *Welcoming New Digital Navigator*: MPL is very excited to share that Emily Jane Jajliardo has joined the team effective today (May 12) as our new Digital Navigator, filling the role vacated by Paul Velasquez. We are confident that Emily will be a fantastic addition to what has proved to be a tremendously successful program and absolutely stellar team.
- *Human Services Updates*:
 - We have been made aware that several surrounding food pantries are experiencing significant challenges due to reductions in USDA funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program, as well as the loss or decrease of other key grant resources. As a result, these organizations are facing depleted supplies and increased difficulty in meeting community needs. The Mansfield Human Services Department's food pantry has, fortunately, not been as severely impacted. Thanks to the extraordinary generosity and continued support of our residents, we've been able to maintain our services despite a notable increase in demand and reduction in availability at other food pantry locations. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed and made a meaningful difference in the lives of your neighbors. Our pantry continues to be a vital part of ensuring that no one in our town goes hungry.
 - On April 30th, the Mansfield Senior Center celebrated its dedicated volunteers—truly the "Bee's Knees." These 80+ individuals play vital roles, from greeting guests and supporting programs to driving for medical appointments and Meals on Wheels, and assisting with lunch service. We were proud to name Rene Steinway our 2025 Volunteer of the Year in recognition of her tireless energy and countless hours of service.
 - On May 8th, the Mansfield Senior Center held its inaugural Mental Health and Wellness Fair, bringing together staff from various town departments, local service providers, and community volunteers to share resources and support self-care. A highlight of the event was the "Pathway of Positivity," where participants selected uplifting quotes to share or keep as personal reminders.

- On Tuesday May 27th, Youth Services will be hosting its 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 home with families via digital backpacks.
- We are pleased to announce that Youth Services was awarded the Local Governance Partner grant in the amount of \$4,865 to help with planning the transition and formation of the Early Start CT Local Governance Partner. As a reminder, Early Start CT combines multiple early childhood programs into one unified agency.
- 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 being finalized 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 Resident Troopers' Office reports that UConn Commencement went as smoothly as could be expected. Personnel fielded a relatively small number of traffic complaints, and most were from areas on campus and not Mansfield/Town roads. Commencement and the NCAA championship highlight the great working relationship the Resident Troopers' Office and CT State Police more broadly has with UConn Police Department. The Resident Troopers' new e-bikes have been extensively used in recent days and been receiving a fair amount of public attention.
- With commencement activities now largely complete, the Mansfield Resident Troopers' Office (RTO) has concluded its "party patrol" efforts for the spring semester.
- With formal approvals from the School Building Committee now in-hand, the Town will be executing a contract for service with a private fencing company that is installing additional (extension) solid fencing along the shared property line of Mansfield Elementary School and several private property owners at the end of Pinewoods Lane. The fencing is being installed to provide needed privacy screening and help prevent individuals (i.e., youth participating in activities outside of normal school hours) from wandering from the school property onto the adjacent private property. As part of this larger project, the Town's external tree contractor has removed a large number of potentially hazardous trees in the immediate vicinity.
- The Department of Facilities Management continues to work closely with design and engineering consultants to further evaluate the feasibility of the existing Animal Control Shelter/Facility site (adjacent to Bicentennial Pond and the DPW garage) serving as the location of a new Animal Control Shelter/Facility, should a facility replacement project ultimately be supported by Mansfield voters.
- Roads drainage projects continue to be actively underway. One Public Works crew is presently working on Spring Hill Road, and that project is approximately 60% complete. A second crew has nearly completed all ongoing drainage improvements on Bassetts Bridge Road. With all catch basin work complete on Kaya Lane and Greenfield Lane, these roads are ready for milling and paving at the end of the month. The Department's third drainage crew is hydro-seeding the road edges on Brookside Lane, Elizabeth Road and Browns Road.
- As a reminder, effective May 7, the Transfer Station's hours and days of operation for the spring, summer, and fall seasons are now Wednesdays 7:00 AM-4:00 PM, Thursdays 11:00 AM-4:00 PM, and Saturdays 7:00 AM-4:00 PM. This results in four additional hours of service to the public each week. The Swap Shop will be open during public hours of operation when volunteers are available.
- Registration is open for the 20th John E. Jackman Tour de Mansfield, the opportunity to explore Mansfield by bicycle on Saturday, June 7! Registration details can be found [online](#).
- The June issue of the Town's e-newsletter is currently in development.
- The Town Manager's most recent monthly appearance on WILI-AM with Wayne Norman took place on May 2 and can be listened to [here](#). His next monthly appearance will take place on June 6.