

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: May 27, 2025
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

- I want to start by conveying a note of sincere thanks to my Executive Assistant, Kim Kowalyshyn, for her tireless work in recent weeks organizing the Mansfield's annual Memorial Day ceremony. I would also like to thank Sara-Ann Chaine, Town Clerk, for all the assistance and support she extended. The hard work of these two individuals in particular ensured that this year's program was a success. The weather cooperated for the parade, and the program was well-organized and well-attended. We greatly appreciate all the veterans, speakers, volunteer organizations, Mansfield Fire Department honor guard, school bands, and members of the general public who came together to honor and recognize the ultimate sacrifice that so many members of the armed services gave during times of conflict to protect the freedoms we enjoy.
- This past week, the Mayor, Town Manager, Director of Planning and Development, and Executive Director of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership met with UConn President Radenka Maric and several senior university officials to discuss multiple areas of shared interest and possible collaboration. This included topics like housing needs (students, faculty/staff, and the broader Mansfield community), opportunities for business development that complement and leverage UConn's presence, and infrastructure issues (specifically water, sewer, and pedestrian safety). President Maric conveyed her vision for a UConn main campus that is an active hub of activity 365 days out of the year to help both with student/workforce recruitment, and also to sustain and grow local businesses that often struggle during the summer months.
- The Town Council's adopted FY 2025/26 budget was acted on at the annual Town Meeting held on May 13. An amendment to increase the Mansfield Board of Education budget by \$57,845 was offered by a voter during floor debate and the motion carried. The FY 2025/26, as amended, was passed by a vote of 131-15. Each year, following final adoption of the ensuing fiscal year's annual budget at Town Meeting, the Town Council votes to formally set a new property tax ("mill") rate for the ensuing fiscal year so that the first semi-annual tax bills can in turn be issued with a July 1, 2025 due date. In order to adequately fund the FY 2025/26 budget, as approved by Town Meeting, and based on projected state aid and other sources of non-tax revenue, staff recommends that the mill rate for FY 2025/26 be set at 20.00 mills, which represents a 10.52 mill decrease (roughly 34.5%) from the present mill rate (30.52).
- As the Town Council is aware, this past week the Mansfield Public Schools Board of Education announced its selection of Candace Morell as the next Mansfield Public Schools Superintendent. Mrs. Morell, who serves as the district's Director of Teaching and Learning, will succeed Peter Dart effective July 1, 2025 upon his retirement. A detailed press release can be accessed [here](#). The Town Manager and the rest of the Town's management team very much look forward to welcoming Mrs. Morell into her new role and collaborating closely on shared goals for the community.
- The CT Council on Small Towns (COST) has alerted municipalities about recent amendments to [HB-5002](#), which – based on COST's analysis – imposes sweeping changes that undermine local planning

processes, impose difficult compliance burdens on towns, and create greater uncertainty regarding the availability of discretionary funding needed to address water pollution, support community and economic development, and investment in infrastructure. COST is emphasizing that many municipalities are facing difficult budget issues this year due to inflation, rising health insurance costs, state education and special education funding shortfalls, and cuts in federal funding. COST argues that this would be a particularly challenging time to impose sweeping changes on municipalities based on a methodology that is under scrutiny with limited legislative analysis to date. More specifically, COST is opposing (and encouraging individual municipalities to oppose) the following provisions in HB-5002:

- *Fair Share Housing Mandate* - The bill requires OPM to determine each town's affordable housing target based on certain factors, including housing mix, grand list strength, wealth, and poverty. This fails to consider water and wastewater capacity and other factors that are critical to supporting housing development. It also requires municipalities to adopt zoning regulations to "create a realistic opportunity" for developers to build affordable housing units to meet the municipalities' state-determined "affordable housing allocation". Such regulations would be subject to review by OPM to determine whether the municipality is in compliance. If a municipality is deemed in compliance or is exempt from the requirements, it may be prioritized for certain discretionary state funding, including Clean Water Fund, the Urban Act, the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP), the Main Street Investment Fund, and the Incentive Housing Zone program. How will this impact funding for small towns that do not have the capacity to meet the assigned housing allocation requirement?
- *Transit-Oriented Communities* – By prioritizing funding for municipalities that qualify as Transit-Oriented Communities, the bill calls into question whether any funding under STEAP, which only has enough funding for 20-30 municipal projects each year, will be available to small towns that are not in a position to qualify as a Transit-Oriented Community.
- *Municipal Liability Costs* - Subjects municipalities to attorney's fees and costs under the Affordable Housing Appeals Act if the court determines that the municipality acted in bad faith or caused undue delays in appealing a decision on an 8-30g affordable housing project. This will have a chilling effect on the right of municipalities to appeal projects that may pose certain environmental, traffic congestion, or other issues in their community.
- *Minimum Parking Requirements* - Prohibits local zoning regulations from establishing minimum off-street parking requirements for certain housing developments.
- *As-of-Right Conversion of Commercial Buildings* - Mandates that municipalities allow commercial buildings to be converted to residential housing developments as-of-right.
- *Fair Rent Commissions* – Requires all municipalities regardless of population to establish and staff fair rent commissions, although municipalities may participate in commissions established by regional Councils of Government.
- *Eagleville Green (Affordable Housing Project)*: This past week, the Department of Planning and Development issued the certificate of zoning compliance for the project as a whole, and the Department of Building and Housing issued the final certificates of occupancy (CO) for the remaining dwellings/buildings associated with the Eagleville Green housing project. It is anticipated that tenants will begin taking residence in their leased units as soon as this week. As a reminder, this is a 42-unit mixed income residential community with 34 (80%) of the units being deed-restricted as affordable. Completion of this very important affordable housing project has been eagerly awaited for some time and stakeholders are in the process of making arrangements for a grand opening celebration.
- *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 valuable assistance from staff, the Town Manager recently coordinated 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). Additional funding would 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. We want to extend special thanks to UConn President Maric, UConn Undergraduate Student Government (USG), and the Capitol Regional Council of Governments (CRCOG) for issuing new/compelling letters in support of this project. 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.
- **Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan:** Town staff and the Town's consultant, FHI Studio (now IMEG), presented the draft Northwest Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan to the Planning and Zoning Commission (Commission), Town Council, and the public on March 12, 2025. On May 19, the PZC held a public hearing on the NW Mansfield Vision and Strategy Plan. PZC referred the plan as written for consideration and endorsement by the Town Council. Formal action will be taken by the Commission after consideration by the Town Council. If adopted, the plan's goals, actions, and strategies will be incorporated into the 2025 *Mansfield Tomorrow* Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) update. 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, *1,375 responses have been received*. The most recent meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the POCD took place on May 15 and the Committee will next meet on June 13. The Town's consultant, FHI Studio/IMEG continues to draft the 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!

- 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.
- *Summer Concert Series at Betsy Paterson Square.* This season's free series kicks off on Thursday, June 5 with a performance by *La Manga* from 6:30 to 8:00 PM in Downtown Storrs. The popular concerts will take place every Thursday through June and July. Find the full schedule at <https://www.mansfieldmusic.org/>
 - *Taste of Mansfield Champions Awards:* The Champion Awards selection committee of the Taste of Mansfield closed nominations for the 2025 Taste of Mansfield Champions Awards April 21, and has selected nominees. A public announcement will be shared pending notifications of the award-winners.
 - *Mansfield Parks & Recreation Summer Brochure:* The summer brochure was recently mailed to all Mansfield homes 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.
 - *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.
 - *Public Art Celebration:* In anticipation of the installation of the mural at Mansfield Elementary School and the sculpture garden completion at Mansfield Public Library in early June, plans for a celebration of the three Art Walk art pieces is underway. Details about the first of the three installations along Southeast Park, created by June Bisantz, is available on the Town's Discover [Mansfield web page](#).
 - Devon Andrews, Library Director, will provide an overview of Mansfield Public Library's programs and operations, as well as an update on a wide range of priority projects and initiatives being carried out by the Library as part of its strategic plan/roadmap, during tonight's regular Council business meeting.
 - The MPL staff team continues to work diligently planning another wonderful Summer Reading program for kids, teens, and adults.
 - June is Pride Month, and Mansfield will celebrate with two planned events during the first week of June. The Pride Flag Raising Ceremony will take place outdoors at the Town Hall flagpole on Monday, June 2 at 4:30 PM. Superintendent Peter Dart will be a special speaker this year. Then, on Friday, June 6 from 5:00–8:00 PM, the Youth Services Bureau and the Mansfield Downtown Partnership will host the 4th Annual Celebrate Pride Festival, featuring live music, entertainment, informational resources, and more in the Betsy Paterson Square.
 - The Mansfield Resident Troopers office will be joined by other State Troopers and Special Olympics athletes from E.O. Smith High School and their Unified sports supporters for the annual Special Olympics Torch Run on Thursday, June 5 at 9:50 AM. The group will receive the Special Olympics Torch at Town Hall, and then run with it to the Mansfield Four Corners. The community is encouraged to gather on the Town Hall lawn to cheer on the runners.
 - *Dog Licensing:* Connecticut dog license renewal is due during the month of June. Please go to www.MansfieldCT.gov/dogs for licensing information. Payments may be made online, by mail, or in person at the Town Clerk's Office.
 - *Human Services Updates:*
 - The Mansfield Department of Human Services is launching the new Summer Food Distribution Program to support families with children during the summer months, when school meals are unavailable. Running from June 17 to August 21, the program provides free, kid-friendly breakfast and lunch items to families whose children qualify for free or reduced lunch. Food can be accessed weekly via the Summer Fun Bus at designated locations, pick-up at the Human Services office on Maple Road, or home delivery for those with transportation challenges. The department is expanding offerings to those in the community in need, such as seniors, to help improve their access to food as well.

- Mansfield Farms to Family Program is gearing up to start its fourth season! Many in the community have been eagerly awaiting the return of this program, and The Human Services Department is happy to report it is on target for a distribution the first week of June (next week). The program is designed to connect residents with locally grown, fresh foods and produce purchased from local farmers. Individuals and families still interested in signing up should contact the Department of Human Services at 860-429-3315 to check eligibility and availability.
- The Mansfield Senior Center chorus kicked off its spring concert series on this past Thursday, May 22. This group performs at various nursing homes in the area to the delight of the residents and their guests. They will perform their final season concert at the Mansfield Senior Center on Thursday, June 5th. The concert is free to attend, but registration is requested by calling (860)429-0262 to save your spot.
- On June 10th, The Senior Center will be partnering with Mansfield Public Library to offer a special presentation titled "Understanding AI." This informative session is designed specifically for seniors and will provide an overview of artificial intelligence. The goal of the program is to support digital literacy and empower residents to feel more comfortable and informed about the evolving role of AI in today's world.
- Parents and guardians can keep teens active and engaged this summer with a variety of fun programs being offered through the Teen Center! From adventure park outings and blueberry picking to bowling and more, there's something for everyone. Check out the Youth Services webpage for more information. <https://www.mansfieldct.gov/2231/Teen-Center>
- Facilities Project Updates:
 - Mansfield Elementary School (MES) Fencing: Plans for proceeding with extended southeast property line fence installation are being finalized and scheduled to begin at the end of the school year (June 16).
 - MES Playground: Facilities is also coordinating the fence work with the resurfacing of the rubberized playground surface which is also scheduled to begin following the last day of school (June 16). This work will consist of expanding the rubberized surface area for enhanced accessibility, the addition of an ADA-compliant "We Go Round," and installation of an additional shade structure with seating. The school district is coordinating a communications plan to families and the community about the limited access to the playground during these improvements.
 - MES Great Hall Acoustical Improvements: Plans for mitigating sound levels in the cafeteria dining space continued to proceed. With the recent approval by the School Building Committee, the Town's architecture and acoustics vendors are working to refine/finalize a design specific to the needs of the elementary school dining space that will be implemented for the next academic year.
 - Mansfield Middle School (MMS) Main Entrance/Security Improvements: Construction of the redesigned MMS main entrance is progressing with the completion of the demolition work in the main office space. New block wall locations have been laid out, and their construction has started with a CMU block delivery this past Monday.
 - MMS HVAC Project: The contract for this grant-funded work was awarded to Savmore Cooling and Heating with the approval of the HVAC School Building Committee. The Town has been working closely with Savmore to verify and place our major equipment order for this project to ensure that all critical components/equipment arrives on time. At this time, there are no concerns with completing the project during the intended summer installation schedule.
- Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services Updates:
 - Utilizing the certified candidate list, a conditional offer of employment has been extended to a candidate for one of the two newly authorized full-time Firefighter/EMT positions that were authorized effective at the start of the new fiscal year. The department is continuing to use the

certified list to fill the remaining new vacancy, which – when filled – would bring total full-time firefighter/EMT staffing to 24 (including captains).

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently announced that – after temporarily suspending the program – a new round of grant applications will soon open for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) program. Chief Roache has been accordingly coordinating with the Town Manager and the Department of Finance, and will soon seek authorization from the Town Council to apply for grant funding. Although this is a highly competitive program for which the Town of Mansfield has not historically had success, the financial support it can provide to municipalities looking to expand Fire/EMS staff capacity is considerable.
- Summary of recent Department calls for service (May 10 – May 23, 2025)

Incident Type Group	Incident Type	Count of Incidents
100 - Fire	Outside rubbish, trash or waste fire	1
300 - Rescue & EMS	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	73
	Motor vehicle accident with injuries	4
	Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	2
	Removal of victim(s) from stalled elevator	1
	Rescue, EMS incident, other	3
300 - Rescue & EMS Total		83
400 - Hazardous Condition	Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	1
	Carbon monoxide incident	1
	Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	1
	Power line down	1
400 - Hazardous Condition Total		4
500 - Service Call	Assist invalid	4
	Lock-out	1
	Person in distress, other	1
	Public service	1
	Public service assistance, other	1
	Service Call, other	1
	Water problem, other	1
500 - Service Call Total		10
600 - Good Intent Call	Dispatched & canceled en route	3
	Good intent call, other	1
	HazMat release investigation w/no HazMat	2
	No incident found on arrival at dispatch address	2
600 - Good Intent Call Total		8
Count of Incidents		110

- *Public Works Updates*

- Roads drainage projects continue to be actively underway. One Public Works crew is presently working on Spring Hill Road, and that project is approximately 70% complete. The crew on Bassetts Bridge Road is replacing four (4) basins and drainage pipes on the CT-195 end after recently discovering their condition warranted replacement. The Town’s contractor milled off two inches (2”) of pavement on Kaya Lane and Greenfield Lane. These roads will be repaved soon. The hydro-seeding of the road edges on Brookside Lane, Elizabeth Road and Browns Road is complete and grass is growing/establishing nicely.
- Road maintenance on gravel roads has been performed in a timely manner, as needed, following rain events that deteriorated their condition.

- 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 with an anticipated publication date of June 2.
- 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.