

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: June 23, 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, the FY 2025/26 budget, which was approved with 90% support at the Town Meeting in May, was reaffirmed by a similarly large margin (76% in support) at the citizen-petitioned budget referendum that took place this past Tuesday June 17. I want to express my sincere gratitude to Deputy Registrars Anne Greineder and Vera Ward and the Town's team of election workers for their invaluable support to the Registrars Al Fraton and Ron Manizza and ensuring that the referendum was conducted successfully. This year's approved budget is a testament to our collective values—it maintains the high-quality municipal services our residents depend on, enables enhancement of services in several key areas, advances capital improvements that support public infrastructure, public safety, and other critical projects, and does so with careful attention to fiscal responsibility. I am grateful for the trust our community continues to place in its Town officials and professional staff.
- We have proceeded to move forward with implementation of our service improvements authorized for the start of the new fiscal year (July 1). More specifically, two conditional offers have been extended to candidates to fill our newly authorized full-time firefighter/EMT positions (FT positions #23 and #24). Their tentative start dates of employment will be July 28th, with a plan for both candidates to attend the Fire Academy Recruit program beginning in August. We have also begun the recruitment for our newly authorized part-time library assistant position at Mansfield Public Library. Lastly, the part-time housing inspector position that was authorized to be upgraded to full-time will do so effective July 1, as planned. The other service improvements (i.e., Public Works, Human Services, Planning and Development) will be phased in as the fiscal year progresses, as planned/budgeted.
- The Town Manager and Chief of Shared Services and Administration attended the CT Town and City Management Association (CTCMA) annual meeting in Glastonbury on June 13. The Town Manager has served as the Vice President of CTCMA for the past two years and was re-elected to this role for FY 2026. Areas of focus at the meeting included use of social media to enhance community engagement, strategies for building staffing capacity, a recap of the most recent state legislative session, and practical considerations for use of artificial intelligence (AI) to foster innovation in municipal operations.
- Prior to the conclusion of the legislative session, [HB-5002](#) was sent to the Governor to be signed into law. Commonly referred to as the "Fair Share" housing bill, the legislation proposed significant changes to local planning processes and instituted new associated municipal compliance requirements with the goal of addressing the shortage and high cost of housing in the state. At a press conference earlier today, the Governor announced he will veto the bill. Governor Lamont had been urged to veto the bill by the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM), which represents 168 of the state's 169 towns, and the Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST), which represents 115. More specifically, CCM and COST opposed 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. This raised concerns about how it will impact funding for small towns that do not have the capacity to meet assigned housing allocation requirements.
 - 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.
- Staff are in the process of arranging for the Council to receive a post-legislative session wrap up presentation from Betsy Gara, Executive Director of COST, during one of the July regular business meetings. The discussion will focus on legislative developments spanning numerous topical areas (i.e., education, environment, energy, housing and development, municipal revenues, public safety, and of course the state budget) from the most recent legislative session of particular relevance to smaller municipalities.
 - Management will begin negotiations with the firefighter’s union this July for a successor collective bargaining agreement. Staff plans to hold a non-noticed meeting with the Council during the month of July in regards to strategy for collective bargaining with the union.
 - *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.

- *Mansfield Tomorrow Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update:* The Community Survey has closed! Thank you to all who assisted in getting the word out. We received 1377 responses, which is a robust response rate. The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the POCD is scheduled for June 26, 2025. 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.
- *Regional Housing Strategy:* The Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) has launched a multi-year [Regional Housing Strategy](#) to support municipalities in implementing their Affordable Housing Plans, provide training and resources, and explore regional approaches to housing creation. Jennifer Kaufman, Director of Planning and Development, has played an active role in this effort, serving on both the Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee, which includes planners from across the region. As part of the study, CRCOG and its consultant Goman + York invited municipalities to submit development or redevelopment sites for evaluation. The goal is to identify sites suitable for a mix of housing types—including affordable and market-rate housing—in both rural and urban settings, with options ranging from “missing middle” to higher-density developments. The Planning and Development Department contacted all owners of parcels over five acres within the Windham Sewer Service Area and requested that the Mansfield Housing Authority submit the Holinko Estates parcel for consideration. In total, five Mansfield sites were submitted. CRCOG has funding to evaluate three sites and is seeking additional resources to expand the study. If a Mansfield site is selected, the property owner and Town will receive a detailed analysis that includes:
 - Applicable zoning requirements;
 - Site feasibility (e.g., utilities, wetlands, topography);
 - A preliminary development pro forma;
 - Recommended zoning or infrastructure changes to enhance viability;
 - Visualizations of potential development concepts.

Selection for this analysis does not imply that a property has been or will be approved for development, or that it will receive the necessary land use approvals in the future. However, this planning exercise will help identify opportunities for a variety of housing types across the region. CRCOG is expected to notify towns of selected sites in the coming months

- The Mansfield Downtown Partnership is holding its annual meeting this Thursday, June 26. The meeting is taking place at 5:30 PM at Huskies Restaurant & Bar.
- *Public Art Celebration:* The mural at Mansfield Elementary School was installed and unveiled to students who participated in the art project with input earlier this month and the sculpture garden at Mansfield Public Library will be progressing this summer. Planning 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](#).
- *Mansfield Public Library (MPL) Updates:*
 - Summer Reading is officially underway! The official Kickoff Party was held at MPL this past Saturday, June 21, and was heavily attended by kids and adults enjoying a wide range of games and other fun programming. Kids were able to begin signing up on the last day of school and there were more than 100 signups in the first 24 hours!
 - Starting on Thursday, June 26, our popular Teen Night programs will switch from being monthly to being weekly for the entire summer! The weekly Teen Nights will feature such super fun programs as “All About Snakes with Riverside Reptiles,” “Shark Week Summer Snow Globes,” a cupcake decorating contest, and more!
 - Library Director Devon Andrews will be attending the American Library Association’s (ALA) Annual Conference in Philadelphia from June 27-30. The conference will provide a valuable opportunity to connect with librarians from around the globe, explore new possibilities for the

future of libraries, and exchange innovative ideas surrounding library services and programs that can ultimately be implemented in Mansfield for the benefit of our library and community.

- *Mansfield Community Center Fees and Membership Options:* Following careful review, the Town Manager and Parks and Recreation leadership are proposing a series of changes to the current membership fees as well as daily rates and membership options that will be the subject of Council review and deliberation at tonight's regular business meeting. If approved by the Town Council, the revised Community Center fee schedule would become effective on August 1, 2025. This will allow for a one-month grace period/delayed implementation following the start of the new fiscal year, which will help from an outreach and communication standpoint. Membership rates were last increased on January 1, 2020. As the Council is aware, Mansfield Parks and Recreation recently completed the development of a master plan and financial sustainability strategy with the assistance of an external firm. Analysis of alternative fees, fee structures, and membership options was a significant focus of the project.
- *Dog Licensing:* As a reminder, Connecticut dog license renewal is due during the month of June (this is the last week to renew dog licenses on time and avoid late fees being applied!). 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:*
 - This past Tuesday, June 17, marked the exciting launch of the *10-week Summer Fun Bus*—a wonderful collaboration between the Mansfield Public Library, Mansfield Public Schools, and Mansfield Human Services. This mobile initiative is all about delivering fun, food, and books to kids all summer long. While the weather was a little rainy, that didn't dampen the energy. Kids were ready and waiting at bus stops—smiling, waving us in, and posing for photos with our very popular orange wavy man! The kids shared popsicles, stories and laughter with each other and the team on the Fun Bus. As a brand-new program, we're already learning and growing the fun that this bus will bring. We're excited to introduce themed weeks to keep this engaging for all the youth and families that come to stop by. We will be sharing updates across our Town webpages and social media platforms as we finalize the plans – stay tuned!
 - The Senior Center is kicking off the summer season in style with a 4th of July BBQ and live concert by local favorite Bruce John! Join us on Tuesday, July 1st starting at 12:00 PM for great food, music, and connection. Tickets are just \$10 per person, and we encourage everyone to register by Thursday, June 27th at noon to reserve their spot. This is a great opportunity to spend time with your friends, get to know someone new, and enjoy some classic summer fun.
 - The Mansfield Senior Center is in search of volunteers to help both at the Front Desk and for our Meals on Wheels Program! The meals on wheels distribution utilizes drivers Tuesday through Friday to deliver food to homebound residents in our community. We are looking for those that are available to assist on any of those days. The front desk volunteer will help with basic questions from those that are coming in to the center, and assist with finding the right staff as needed. This support is needed any day of the week in the afternoons. If you are interested, reach out to the Senior Center Supervisor, Jessica Tracy at 860-487-9874.
 - Youth Services launched summer with a popular annual event, providing pizza kits to families, purchased from a Mansfield resident who owns the local restaurant, Pizza 101. These kits help to encourage fun, positive connection within families making dinner together, and a break from dinner planning. Families shared photos of kids enjoying the experience.
 - This past week marked the beginning of the Teen Center Summer Hours. We will be offering a variety of engaging activities for Mansfield's youth throughout the summer. Both middle and high school aged youth can look forward to a mix of onsite and offsite events every Thursday morning, designed to keep them active, connected, and involved.
 - On Fridays, the Teen Center located within the Mansfield Community Center will be open from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM, with lunch provided to teens who arrive by 11:30 AM. We encourage

everyone to visit the [Youth Services section of the town website](#) to explore the full lineup of summer offerings and support this valuable resource for our teen community.

- *Facilities Project Updates:*

- Mansfield Elementary School (MES) Great Hall Acoustical Improvements: The School Building Committee (SBC) reviewed multiple design options for sound mitigation in the MES Great Hall at its special meeting on Thursday, June 12. All options reviewed were capable of meeting the attenuation specifications previously selected by the SBC, and this meeting focused on appearance and aesthetics. The committee selected an option to pursue with specific requested modifications pertaining to panel height and expressed a willingness to further explore the merits of installing additional panels on the walls.
- MES Playground: Resurfacing of the rubberized playground surface at MES is commencing this week after being delayed this past week due to rain events. This work will consist of expanding the rubberized surface area for enhanced accessibility at both playgrounds, the addition of an ADA-compliant and inclusive “We Go Round” in the bigger kids playground, and installation of an additional shade structure with seating. With respect to the resurfacing specifically, the scope involves removing 100% of the existing surface material (i.e., rubber and wood chips) at both the preschool/K and the primary playgrounds, doing subgrade preparation, installing the one new piece of equipment, and re-pouring rubber surface for the entire extent of the playground. The work is anticipated to take the playground out of use for the majority of the summer, and communications have been issued to ensure community members are aware of this and provide information on alternative playscapes.
- MES Water Treatment System: CT Water (certified system operator) informed the Town this past week that the design scope for the controls that they had been waiting on being furnished by a subcontractor (RH White) was finally provided. CT Water reports that they are reviewing the design to ensure that it meets requirements. CT Water further reports that the next step will entail fabrication of the control panel, and this process will take four to five weeks. At this time, start-up of the system is anticipated for late-July.
- Mansfield Middle School (MMS) Main Entrance/Security Improvements: This past week we learned of a production delay for our MMS elevator car that will likely delay that portion of the MMS Main Entrance project by approximately 60 days. There were also some clearance issues identified in the elevator shaft that will require some additional engineering and structural modifications to resolve, but this will be done prior to receipt of the elevator car and will not contribute to the delay. The remainder of the project is making progress as planned and on schedule. With the close of school for summer break, workers have started on exterior demolition to the former main entrance canopy, removal of the main entrance flag pole (will be reinstalled at completion of project) and front entrance site work. An updated project timeline for the elevator replacement is expected this month. Changes in the project timeline/approach will not impact the opening and operations of school this fall. Administrators have created a plan and will to support any student, staff, or visitor impacted by the delay of the elevator installation. First and second floors can be accessed without an elevator. Third floor is not accessible for people with mobility issues, and, as such, classrooms and programs can be shifted to other accessible rooms on the first and second floors as needed.
- MMS HVAC Project: The MMS HVAC Committee met last week to approve several invoices for this project. During that meeting, staff shared an update regarding anticipated equipment delivery delays as well an update on which refrigerant types would be available for the equipment. Staff and our architects are evaluating the options available. This delay will shift the installation of the equipment from a summer break install to a 2025-26 school year 2nd shift install schedule that we anticipate will begin in September, with the intention of meeting our original grant deadline of December 31, 2025. A more precise updated project timeline is expected this month as more information on the equipment becomes available. Changes in the project timeline/approach will not impact the opening and operations of school this fall.

- MMS Flooring: Recoating approximately 9,000 sq. ft. of flooring on the first floor of MMS with epoxy flooring, identical to the work done on the third floor, began on June 18. This project will conclude prior to the start of summer classes on July 7).
- During its regular business meeting this evening, Sgt. King, Resident Trooper Supervisor for the Mansfield Resident Troopers' Office (RTO), will provide a broad overview of law enforcement operations in Mansfield, recap of recent/ongoing law enforcement activities, including pertinent activities from the 2024/2025 academic year, as well as a "look ahead" for fall 2025/2026 law enforcement activities and town-wide law enforcement priorities more broadly.
- Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services Updates:
 - After receiving authorization from the Town Council at its June 9 business meeting, Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services has begun preparing a funding application for the Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program, which is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), for the purposes of hiring four (4) additional full-time Firefighter/EMTs. The grant submission deadline is July 3.
 - Summary of recent Department calls for service (June 6 – June 20, 2025)

Incident Type Group	Incident Type	Count of Incidents
100 - Fire	Special outside fire, other	1
300 - Rescue & EMS	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	46
	Motor vehicle accident with injuries	4
	Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	1
	Motor vehicle/pedestrian accident (MV Ped)	1
	Rescue, EMS incident, other	1
300 - Rescue & EMS Total		53
400 - Hazardous Condition	Electrical wiring/equipment problem, other	1
	Gas leak (natural gas or LPG)	1
	Power line down	1
400 - Hazardous Condition Total		3
500 - Service Call	Assist invalid	6
	Person in distress, other	1
	Public service	1
500 - Service Call Total		8
600 - Good Intent Call	Cancelled en route EMS	4
700 - False Alarm	Unintentional transmission of alarm, other	2
Count of Incidents		71

- *Public Works Updates*
 - The Town's paving contractor paved Kaya Lane and Greenfield Lane on June 3 and final restoration of the roads has since been completed.
 - The drainage crew on Bassetts Bridge Road has completed its work. Reclamation of the road began on June 17 and will continue through the next few weeks. The road will be reclaimed

and paved in three or four different sections to allow access to the park and boat ramp at Mansfield Hollow. Road closures to through-traffic will occur during this time.

- The Spring Hill Road drainage replacement project is 85% complete with four catch basins and five pipe road crossings remaining to replace.
- Road maintenance on gravel roads has been performed in a timely manner, as needed, following rain events that deteriorated their condition.
- The roadside mowing program is in full swing.
- The sweeping program has been halted pending significant repairs to the sweeper.
- The June/July 2025 issue of the Town's e-newsletter, *News & Updates*, was published and can be accessed [here](#).