

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: July 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:

- I will be out-of-state beginning tomorrow (Tuesday, July 29) and have asked Ms. Maria Capriola, Chief of Shared Services and Administration, to serve as Acting Town Manager from Tuesday morning until Sunday afternoon (7/29-8/3).
- Following the June 17 citizen-petitioned referendum on the approved FY 2025/26 budget, we have continued to make progress on implementation of the "service improvements" that were funded in the approved FY 2025/26 budget. More specifically:
 - Two full-time firefighter/EMTs (positions #23 & 24) began work today, July 28th. Stephen Petrillo has served as a volunteer in the fire service for five years. Stephen has professional experience as an EMT and has served as a field training officer. He holds numerous certifications in the fire service and is a graduate of Eastern Connecticut State University with a bachelor's degree in business administration. Todd Zavatsky has served as a volunteer in the fire service for four years. Additionally, he has professional experience as an EMT and holds numerous certifications in the fire service. Both Stephen and Todd will be attending the CT Fire Academy Recruit program beginning in August. Welcome Stephen and Todd!
 - The part-time housing inspector, Colby Miller, based in the Building and Housing Department transitioned to full time with the beginning of the fiscal year.
 - We have nearly completed the recruitment for the newly authorized part-time library assistant position. A conditional offer has been extended to the preferred candidate.
 - Staff has prepared a new classification request for the Youth Services prevention worker position that was authorized for September 1st. The Personnel Committee and Council will be reviewing the matter at their respective meetings this evening.
- Progress has been made during the last few months with respect to the ongoing municipal facilities master planning process and I am happy to report that the Town will be entering into a contract for service with the architecture/design firm known as EDM for the next phase of this important work. Council will recall that during the prior year, a primary focus of the municipal facilities master planning project was a comprehensive public engagement campaign intended to obtain in-depth stakeholder feedback relative to the Town's municipal facility needs. Findings and recommendations from this phase of the work were presented to the Town Council and concurrently incorporated into a \$250,000 grant request from the Community Investment Fund (CIF) that will enable the Town to undergo more in-depth architecture/design services as well as community engagement relative to the redevelopment of the existing municipal services campus to potentially incorporate additional functions such as senior services. Next steps will involve more intensive schematic/conceptual design work and development of more precise "pre-referendum" project budgets, cost estimation, and debt capacity/tax impact analysis to ensure that all the pertinent information is compiled for decision-making purposes in advance of a potential bond referendum in November 2026.

- As Council is aware, Landmark Properties is in the final phase of completing the large-scale multi-family development referred to as The Standard at Four Corners. Personnel from the Building and Housing Department, Fire Marshal's Office, and Planning and Development continue to perform inspections (often on a daily basis) to ensure compliance with all applicable building and fire codes, and zoning regulations. Landmark has indicated that it is aiming for an early-August completion to enable incoming tenants to assume occupancy by late-August.
- The last day to pay July tax bills without incurring interest is Friday August 1, 2025. Both the Revenue Collector and Assessor's offices will be open to the public from 8 am to Noon that Friday to accommodate last-minute payments.
- Plans and promotion are underway for the fifth year of the Mansfield Local Government Academy to start in early September. The MLGA is a 12-class program designed to educate and familiarize citizens with all aspects of their Town government. Informed citizens lead to more engaged citizens, and we hope to enroll about 20 individuals for this 2025 session. Those who are interested may email townmngn@mansfieldct.org.
- During its July 28 business meeting, the Town Clerk will provide the Council with an overview of the office's statutory responsibilities/operations, as well as an update on ongoing activities, and priorities.
- *Mansfield Tomorrow Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) Update*: The next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on the POCD is scheduled for August 14, 2025. FHI Studio/IMEG and staff are working on the draft plan. The Ad Hoc Committee will review chapters over the summer, with a public presentation anticipated in the fall. Stay informed and follow the plan's progress at www.mansfieldtomorrow.org.
- *Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) Public Hearings*: At its regular meeting on Monday, July 21, 2025, the PZC continued the Public Hearing on the application of Ryan McDonald (King Hill Properties, LLC) for a Special Use Permit with associated Site Plan modifications for the establishment known as "Ted's". Ted's recently obtained building permits for the installation of a large seasonal tent and a zoning permit to allow temporary outdoor dining. The Applicant now proposes to replace the tent and seasonal dining setup with a permanent addition to the property, providing indoor and outdoor patron space that can be used year-round. During this same meeting, the PZC also initiated changes to Zoning Regulations related to Site Plan and Special Permit Requirements, Performance Standards, and the Water Pipeline Overlay Zone.
- *Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) Regional Housing Strategy*: At the Town Council's June 23, 2025, meeting, staff reported that five sites in Mansfield were submitted to CRCOG for consideration in a site suitability analysis as part of CRCOG's Regional Housing Strategy. 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. Competition for this funding is strong, however, as CRCOG has funding for only three sites across the 38-town region. CRCOG is seeking additional funding from the CT Department of Housing (CT DOH) to support an analysis in each town. Staff will keep the Council informed regarding next steps. We have been informed that towns will likely be notified within the next four to six months if funding is received.
- *CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (CTDEEP) Urban and Community Forestry Grant*: Mansfield has recently received a grant from the CT DEEP Urban and Community Forestry program to create an inventory of the health and ecology of the town's forests. The Town will contract with a local forester to assess the stand structure of its over 1,500 acres of forestland, evaluate the health of trees and the presence of invasive species, and develop an action plan to promote a healthy ecosystem for years to come. A related request for proposals (RFP) has been [issued](#) by the Town, and a community survey of town resident perceptions and uses of our forests will be released later in the year.

- *Mansfield Public Library (MPL) Updates:*
 - On Friday, August 1, MPL hopes that everyone will join special guests from Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center in Mystic to meet live animals and learn how they use unique colors and patterns to camouflage for survival.
 - MPL is partnering with UConn's HELLO Lab for an Inclusive American Sign Language (ASL) Storytime on Saturday, August 9. Attendees will be treated to an inclusive reading of *Mighty Mila*, featuring a reading in American Sign Language, followed by time for crafts, games, and playtime. This is a welcoming space for all children- D/deaf, hard of hearing, hearing, and all languages, and families can RSVP to ensure that accessibility accommodations are available.
 - As part of its exciting programming surrounding Adult Summer Reading programs, on Tuesday, August 5, MPL will feature a program called, "Fungi Frenzi" to introduce participants to backyard mushroom growing. Master gardener Mark Gostkiewicz will be leading this eye-opening workshop that will cover the ins and outs of cultivating three easy-to-grow mushroom varieties: Shiitakes, Oysters, and Wine Caps. Not only will participants learn about the life cycle and needs of these fungi, but they will also discover the benefits of using straw or wood chips as a growing media and how to utilize every part of a tree for mushroom cultivation.
 - On Tuesday, August 12, MPL will be joined by Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation for their program, "Bird Brains"! Far from being "hard-wired" as previously thought, recent research proves that birds actually possess sophisticated cognitive abilities. Indeed, responding to changing conditions by changing the way they act, is often crucial to their survival. This program will compare and contrast the fascinating qualities of avian intelligence among three different species of birds: an American Crow, a Peregrine Falcon, and an owl.
 - MPL's August Art Wall Exhibit will feature watercolor and acrylic paintings from local Mansfield artist, Raina Hathorne. MPL will host a meet-and-greet reception for her on Tuesday, August 5 and the artwork can be viewed anytime that the Library is open during the month of August.
- *Mansfield Parks and Recreation Updates:*
 - Following the Town Council's authorization to adjust membership fees and options at its June 23 meeting, staff have disseminated pertinent information via multiple methods (i.e., email, stamped mail, at the community center, and [online](#)) to Mansfield Community Center (MCC) members regarding changes to membership rates, daily fees (as of August 1), and insurance supported memberships changes (as of January 1, 2026). Feedback from members, users, and residents is being carefully considered during this time, and staff continue to evaluate alternative approaches for ensuring that the facility remains affordable to all regardless of one's financial situation.
 - An information session regarding the upcoming changes to insurance-supported memberships and new membership options was held on July 24 in the Council Chambers, part of the communication plan about this program change effective December 31, 2025. The session included a brief presentation on the history and challenges of the program, new membership alternatives, discount offers, the Mansfield Fee Waiver program, and a Q&A session was provided by the Town Manager and the Director of Parks and Recreation. The session was well attended. During the session, the Town Manager informed attendees that the vendors administering Silver Sneakers and Renew-Active have responded to the planned discontinuation of ISMs with an enhanced desire to negotiate potential new terms that would be agreeable to the Town and enable continued participation in these programs. Updated information regarding insurance-supported memberships is available at MCC and [online](#).
 - The Community Center's annual maintenance week is August 18-24 and will require closing MCC during the week for cleaning and project work. Staff is in close collaboration with Facilities Management regarding the project task list over the seven-day period and the pre- and post-weeks. In-person fall registrations will be available at Lenard Hall during the week.
 - The Town's contractor (DDS Acoustical) has indicated that installation of the acoustical ceiling panels at Lenard Hall will be performed the first week in September. It is a 1-2 day project.

- Over the first three weeks of the [summer camp program](#), 543 children have participated in Camp Mansfield and Specialty Camps.
- A month-long celebration of [National Parks and Recreation Month](#) continues with activities and an awareness campaign of our valuable local parks and recreation resources.
- The fall brochure will be mailed to Mansfield homes the week of August 8.
- The final phase of the fitness equipment upgrades at the Mansfield Community Center has been ordered. Staff is working with the vendor to expedite delivery for tentative installation during the MCC shutdown/maintenance week.
- Staff continues with implementation of the Parks and Recreation master plan, including capital improvements (including ADA improvements), operations, and financial sustainability work.
- A Family Fun Day will be held at Bicentennial Pond on Saturday, August 9th, 12:00–3:30 PM.
- Staff have been working closely with the Department’s registration software provider, RecTrac, regarding use of a new registration app intended to make the registration process faster and more convenient for users. The app has a tentative live date in October.
- **Human Services Updates:**
 - This is the final week to sign up for our Back-to-School Program, which provides essential school supplies to families in need. If you or someone you know could benefit from this support, please contact Human Services at 860-429-3315 to learn more.
 - The meal kit program remains a strong success, receiving enthusiastic feedback from participants. One resident shared, *“The variety of food and recipes has been unbelievable and very much needed for our household.”* Comments like this highlight the meaningful impact the program is having in supporting nutrition and well-being in our community.
 - The Mansfield Senior Center was closed last week for scheduled maintenance, and Human Services is excited to share that several fun and welcoming touches were added to enhance the space. Outside, a large section of parking lot immediately adjacent to the building was repaved, and a section of concrete sidewalk was replaced to improve accessibility. Additionally, all wood floors in the facility were refinished with two fresh coats of urethane, the main entrance seating area was repainted, all tile floors were stripped and re-waxed and carpets and upholstery were spot treated. An order for new main entrance waiting area seating is also in progress. A big thank you to the Facilities Management Department and Public Works for helping make these upgrades possible!
 - The Mansfield Senior Center is excited to welcome a new Chair Yoga instructor! To introduce the program, the center will be offering a free trial class on Wednesday July 30th from 10:45 – 11:45 at the Senior Center. While the class is free, registration is required. If you need help or have questions, please contact the Senior Center at 860-429-0262.
 - It is proving to be a fun and Impactful summer for the Mansfield youth. Youth Services is buzzing with activity as the summer programs are in full gear!
 - Mustangs continues to thrive, with participants engaging in meaningful community service projects. Over the past few weeks, they have volunteered at local farms and animal shelters, giving back to the community and helping to build connections.
 - GOAL has been a standout success this year, reaching full capacity with rising freshmen from the Region 19 school district. Participants have not only developed strong peer relationships but have also grown personally as they prepare for their transition to E.O. Smith High School.
 - Thursday Teen Center programming has been a hub of energy and creativity. Summer events have included a self-care day, tie-dye and yogurt parfaits, blueberry picking, and a trip to Storrs Adventure Park. Programs have been consistently filled to capacity.
 - Teen Center Drop-In Fridays are also gaining momentum. By offering lunch and a welcoming space, more teens are stopping by to check it out. This has resulted in higher attendance than in previous summers. There is still room for more teens to stop in and check it out! The program is offered Fridays from 10:00am – 12:30pm.

- *Mansfield Middle School (MMS) Construction Projects:* With respect to the Main Entrance/Security Improvement Project, construction of the main entrance interior drywall and ceilings are near completion. The old elevator car was removed and the shaft wall reconstruction is in progress. With regard to the MMS HVAC Construction Project, approximately 75% of the new HVAC equipment/components needed for MMS have arrived and are being stored by the Town’s contractor, Savmore, until the order is complete and installation can begin.
- *Mansfield Elementary School (MES) Projects:* The additional fence panels that were being installed to extend the solid fencing along the border of the MES property and abutting neighbors on Pinewoods Lane have been installed. Arborvitae will be planted in one specific section of steeper slope where fencing was not practicable to close the remaining gap. Plantings will take place when weather is appropriate. After completing extensive removal of existing wood chips and rubberized material, the MES playground will now receive the new rubberized surfacing. Contractors are expecting to be onsite next week. The MES water treatment system is near completion with the final installation of the control panel – which was fabricated off-site and delivered to CT Water this past week – expected to occur this week. The panel installation will be followed by a CT Department of Public Health (DPH), which will allow the system to be put into service by the beginning of August.
- **Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services Updates:**
 - Summary of recent Department calls for service (June 12 – July 25, 2025)

Incident Type Group	Incident Type	Count of Incidents
100 - Fire	Building fire	1
300 - Rescue & EMS	EMS call, excluding vehicle accident with injury	56
	Medical Alarm	1
	Motor vehicle accident with injuries	5
	Motor vehicle accident with no injuries.	1
	Rescue, EMS incident, other	1
300 - Rescue & EMS Total		64
400 - Hazardous Condition	Arcing, shorted electrical equipment	1
	Electrical wiring/equipment problem, other	1
	Oil or other combustible liquid spill	1
	Power line down	4
400 - Hazardous Condition Total		7
500 - Service Call	Assist invalid	1
	Lock-out	2
	Police matter	1
	Water or steam leak	1
500 - Service Call Total		5
600 - Good Intent Call	Dispatched & canceled en route	3
	Good intent call, other	3
	No incident found on arrival at dispatch address	3
600 - Good Intent Call Total		9
700 - False Alarm	Alarm system activation, no fire - unintentional	2
	Alarm system sounded due to malfunction	1
	Carbon monoxide detector activation, no CO	1
	CO detector activation due to malfunction	1
Count of Incidents		95

- *Public Works Updates*
 - Bassetts Bridge Road reclamation is complete and the first layer of asphalt is applied. The final layer of paving is scheduled to begin this week. Road closures to through traffic may occur during this time. Driveway aprons and curbing, where needed, will be done after the final layer of paving.
 - The drainage crew on Mulberry road completed 2 of 17 catch basins and 2 of 3 pipe crossings. This project will continue throughout the summer.
 - The drainage crew on Spring Hill Road drainage replacement is complete and the road is ready for reclamation and paving.
 - A crew graded the unimproved section of Woodland Road as some of the recent heavy rains created large potholes that needed to be filled in a timely manner.
 - A crew completed the sidewalk repair at the Mansfield Senior Center. The crew also prepped the parking spots adjacent to the concrete sidewalk for a contractor to pave. After paving, another contractor line striped the parking spots.
 - The roadside mowing program is in full swing.
 - Personnel continue to replace missing signs, address miscellaneous citizen requests, patch potholes and pick up wood from trees that are the responsibility of the Town.
- The August/September issue of the Town's e-newsletter is presently in production with an anticipated publication date of August 1.