

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: December 8, 2025
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

- With the new Town Council now seated following the municipal elections earlier this month, the Council's biannual goal-setting session is taking place this evening and will largely supplant other "normal business" to ensure the bulk of the Council's time and attention can be focused on this important exercise. The Town Manager and staff prepared associated reference materials that were circulated to members of the Council for review this past week, and a series of guiding questions have been developed to help facilitate the goal-setting session.
- The Town Manager, Chief of Shared Services and Administration, Finance Director, and other pertinent staff are in the process of finalizing the FY 2026/27 budget development guidance documents that will be transmitted to all members of the municipal management team next week. As a reminder, this will be the fourth year that the Town is developing its comprehensive annual operating budget and 5-year capital improvement plan using the ClearGov web-based platform. This will be the second year that Mansfield Public Schools is using ClearGov to develop its budget as well.
- After more than 32 years of dedicated service to the Town of Mansfield, longtime Parks and Recreation leader Jay O'Keefe will be retiring on April 30, 2026. Jay has been a cornerstone of the department and the broader community, growing up here in Mansfield and devoting his career to programs and facilities that strengthen our town – including playing a central role in launching the Mansfield Community Center. His leadership, creativity, and steady presence have touched generations of residents, and his commitment to ensuring a smooth transition in the months ahead reflects the professionalism he has brought to his work each day. Jay's impact will be felt for years to come, and we look forward to celebrating his remarkable career and expressing our deep gratitude for all he has given to Mansfield.
- This past week the Town Manager and Chief of Shared Services and Administration provided the three new members of the Town Council a detailed orientation to Town governance and operations.
- Over the past two weeks the Town Manager has been participating meetings of the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) Legislative Committee in which the committee working to finalize the legislative priorities it will present to the Policy Board for adoption prior to the start of the upcoming 2026 "short session." Once finalized and adopted by the Policy Board, these priorities will be shared with the Town Council. Topical areas of priority include economic vitality and community development, housing, infrastructure and multi-use trails, public sector workforce development and shared services, road safety, and transportation planning.
- Winter Welcome on Saturday, December 6 enjoyed temperate weather and a robust turnout of community members. Performances from Consonnare, the UConn Tubas, and Mansfield Community Center's *The Nutcracker* entertained the crowd. Ice sculptures created by UConn Dining Services as well as 16 tables of exhibits and activities were available to see, and the Trim-A-Tree Contest attracted hundreds of votes. Mansfield Resident State Troopers needed to bring in a second cruiser

to hold all the toys donated to Stuff-a-Cruiser. Downtown Storrs businesses also offered specials and treats to support the event and welcome winter.

- Town staff continue to move forward in our work with EDM Studios (architecture and design firm) regarding the municipal services campus master plan. As a reminder, a \$250,000 grant from the Community Investment Fund (CIF) administered by DECD is enabling 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 and the public library. Last month, members of the Town’s management team took part in multiple days of facility walkthroughs and in-person meetings involving present and future needs of Town Hall, Mansfield Senior Center, Mansfield Community Center, and Mansfield Public Library. The EDM project team subsequently posed numerous follow-up lines of inquiry with staff to further understand existing facility attributes/limitations and clarify needs and preferences for new/redesigned facilities. The ad hoc staff committee for the project met with EDM this past week to receive an update and begin planning for broader community/stakeholder engagement efforts. 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.
- This past week, the Town Manager and multiple members of the Town Council attended the 2025 Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) Annual Convention at Mohegan Sun. The conference offered valuable opportunities to connect with municipal leaders from across the state, participate in training sessions, and learn about emerging best practices in local government. Workshops covered a wide range of topics—including municipal finance, public safety, housing policy, intergovernmental collaboration, and advancements in technology that can enhance service delivery. The convention luncheon and awards ceremony featured state officials and policy experts, including Governor Lamont, which provided helpful insights into statewide initiatives that will affect Mansfield in the coming year. In addition to these sessions, Mansfield was formally recognized by SustainableCT during a pre-conference breakfast reception in the exhibit hall for achieving the Climate Leader designation. This recognition reflects the Town’s ongoing commitment to environmental stewardship, sustainability, and climate resilience. Overall, the convention reinforced the importance of innovation, collaboration, and continued leadership as we address the evolving needs of our community.
- The 12th and final session of this year’s Mansfield Local Government Academy took place this past week and entailed a discussion about appointed/advisory boards and committees, elective bodies, Mansfield’s Republican and Democratic town committees, and concluded with detailed debrief on the program as a whole. This year’s cohort was truly a delight, and we have been very appreciative of the positive and supportive feedback we received each week as well as the thoughtful perspectives that were offered during the wrap-up portion of the final session.
- We are pleased to announce that Jillene Woodmansee has been promoted to the position of Assistant Director of Planning and Development. Jillene has been with the Town of Mansfield for 14 years and has previously held positions in Youth Services and the Resident Trooper’s Office. Most recently, Jillene has served as a Planner in the Department of Planning and Development, fulfilling the role of our Zoning Enforcement Officer (ZEO). She is a certified ZEO, a certified CDBG Grant Administrator, a certified wetlands agent, and she has completed her American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) prep course to become a certified planner. She holds a bachelor’s degree in paralegal studies. Congratulations Jillene!
- The following summarizes the status of personnel-related service improvements approved as part of the FY 25/26 budget:
 - Building & Housing: Conversion of the part-time position to full-time status is complete.
 - Fire & Emergency Services: Two additional full-time Firefighter/EMT positions were created and filled as of July 28, 2025.

- Human Services: A full-time Youth Services Prevention Worker position was created and filled on September 22, 2025 and a part-time Human Services Outreach Worker position was created and will be filled as of December 16, 2025.
- Library: A part-time Library Assistant position was created and filled on August 4, 2025.
- Planning & Development: The Assistant Town Planner/Community Planner classification was reinstated, and the position was filled on December 8, 2025.
- Public Works (Grounds Division): Establishment of an additional laborer position is in progress; a preferred candidate has been identified and hiring steps are underway.
- *Mansfield Public Library Updates:*
 - Mansfield Public Library is presently hosting a Toy Swap with donations of gently-used, giftable toys being accepted at the front desk during open hours. The swap officially kicked off on December 1 and will extend through this Friday, December 12. The swap event itself is taking place on Saturday, December 13 (and beyond, as supplies last). Does your family have toys in great condition that you no longer use? Please consider donating to the swap! Please only bring items that are in good condition that you would want to bring home for your child to play with.
 - The Library is excited to host a drop-in jewelry making program tomorrow, December 9. Adult patrons are welcome to join us to make some beautiful jewelry for themselves or give as a gift.
 - On December 13, Thread City Classical Dance returns for a special ballet storytime featuring stories and dancing from the Nutcracker Ballet, followed by an interactive dance demonstration.
 - The December 19 Tech Savvy class, led by Digital Navigator Lauren, will focus on password managers and safety. Attendees will learn what to look for in a password manager and how to keep their information safe through two-factor authentication, passkeys, biometrics, and more.
 - The Friends of the Mansfield Library have returned with their popular holiday pop-up sale, full of low-priced books that would make great gifts! Community members can shop the sale any time that the Library is open.
 - Buchanan Auditorium will serve as the host site for another blood drive in partnership with the Red Cross on December 27.
 - On December 31, families are invited to join us to ring in the “Noon Year” with crafts, snacks, a bubble dance party, and a balloon drop countdown!
- *Mansfield Parks and Recreation Updates:*
 - Communication reminders continue to be forward to Silver Sneaker and Renew-Active members regarding the continuation of these Insurance-Supported Membership programs into 2026 at the Mansfield Community Center (MCC). These memberships will carry on seamlessly into 2026. No reapplication or additional forms are needed.
 - The annual Holiday Craft Fair and family Jingle Jog events will be held at MCC this coming Saturday, December 13. More than 30 local craft vendors will display and have items for sale. Jingle Jog will be held on the indoor track. Bells are provided and prizes distributed to participants for this non-competitive, family fun activity.
 - Tickets are now on sale for the annual Parks and Recreation presentation of *The Nutcracker*, which will be held at Mansfield Middle School on December 13 and 14.
 - The Winter Solstice Art Show exhibit dates at the Mansfield Community Center are December 13 through January 17. This event is free to all and sponsored by the Mansfield Arts Advisory Committee.
 - The annual cost of service analysis of Mansfield Parks and Recreation programs and services commenced last month and is still in progress with support from 110% Inc., the independent contractor that worked with the Town to complete the comprehensive 2024 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Financial Sustainability Strategy.
 - Park Improvement Projects: The Town is in the process of reviewing proposals that were received last month in response to a formal Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that was issued

regarding planning and design services related to improvements at Southeast Park, Sunny Acres Park, and establishment and design of a Mansfield Dog Park – including ADA compliance and accessibility upgrades. Interviews with selected vendors are anticipated in December or early-January.

- Bicentennial Pond Bathhouse: Mansfield Parks and Recreation continues to work collaboratively with multiple Town departments, the Town's architecture and design firm (PFA Architecture), and pertinent vendors/contractors to develop detailed plans for a new bathhouse at Bicentennial Pond.
- *Mansfield Downtown Partnership:* Staff members from Mansfield have been working with the Windham Downtown Neighborhood Association to plan for Taste 2 Towns, Restaurant Week in Mansfield and Windham. This year's dates are January 26 to February 8, 2026. Active solicitation of sponsors is underway, as well as local restaurant sign-up.
- *Human Services Updates:*
 - The Energy Assistance Program, offered in partnership with the Access Agency, continues to keep the Adult Services team very busy. As colder weather approaches, residents in need of heating assistance are encouraged to apply soon to ensure timely processing. Appointments can be scheduled by contacting the Human Services Office at (860) 429-3315.
 - The spirit of generosity continues to shine in Mansfield this holiday season. The Human Services Department's Seasonal Giving Program is in full swing, and thanks to the remarkable support of our community, 65 children have already been directly sponsored by individuals, families, and local businesses to ensure they receive gifts this year. An additional 90 children will be supported through the annual Stuff-a-Cruiser event and Toy Drive, helping caregivers provide meaningful holiday traditions for their families. This year, the department will also provide 68 households with holiday meal baskets—tailored to accommodate dietary needs—to help ensure that all families are able to enjoy a nourishing and festive holiday meal. This tremendous outpouring of kindness reflects the very best of Mansfield: neighbors supporting neighbors so that every household can celebrate their holidays and traditions with joy. We extend our sincere appreciation to all donors whose generosity makes this important community effort possible.
 - Lunch and Learn Programs: The Senior Center's new Lunch and Learn series continues to grow in popularity. Participants enjoy a complimentary light lunch while learning about important health and wellness topics. This month's sessions will focus on understanding the connection between brain health and balance, as well as strategies for healthy eating on a budget. Those interested in attending may contact the Senior Center for details.
 - Chorus Performances: The Senior Center Chorus is especially active during the holiday season. Over the next two weeks, the group will visit several local nursing homes to share music and holiday cheer with residents. The Senior Center will also host its annual Chorus Concert on Thursday, December 18 at 1:30 PM. This event is free and open to the public.
 - Winter Holidays Around the World Program: On Wednesday, December 10, the Senior Center will offer a special program on winter holiday traditions around the world, presented by Sue Harrington. Participants will explore a variety of cultural and religious celebrations that have shaped this festive season throughout history. Pre-registration is required, along with a modest program fee. Interested participants may call the Senior Center at 860-429-0262 to reserve a spot.
 - Noon-Year's Eve Celebration: The Senior Center will welcome the New Year with its annual Noon-Year's Eve celebration on December 31. Festivities begin at 10:30 AM with live music by local singer June Bisantz, featuring light jazz and Americana. The event will include appetizers, mocktails, and a celebratory toast at noon. The fee is \$7.00, and pre-registration is required by Friday, December 26.
 - Youth Services is actively recruiting candidates for two part-time Parent Ambassador positions as part of the new Early Start CT program. These advocates will play a key role in supporting

the implementation of this statewide initiative at the local level. The Department's Early Childhood Services Coordinator has been participating in program meetings to gain a deeper understanding of Early Start CT and to prepare for the required local needs assessment, which is scheduled to be completed by summer 2026.

- *Fire and Emergency Services Updates:*

- The Department wants to extend its congratulations to firefighters Steve Petrillo, Todd Zavatsky, and Casey Berryman who all just completed Recruit Class 76. These firefighters are back in service for the Town as of this week.
- Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services responded to 86 calls over the past two weeks, unfortunately, the Town is working through a bug with the reporting software vendor (ESO) that is preventing the customary report-by-call format.
- The department's Station Design working group has been exploring the needs around a possible replacement for the Eagleville Fire Station that similarly serves the CT-32 corridor but would add enhanced operational usefulness/value for responding to calls in southern Mansfield. The working group continues to work on preliminary ideas with an architect, who recently provided a conceptual rendering illustrating what a new fire station could look like.
- Spring Hill Fire Station (Station 307) Renovations: The town is currently soliciting proposals for budgeted renovation work at the Spring Hill Fire Station (Station 307), which consists of relatively minor renovations to the kitchen space, and lower level. A second walk through was performed last month bids were due on December 3. The Town's project manager is currently reviewing each bid thoroughly and will work with the responding vendors on any questions or things that were not clearly addressed in their bids. The goal is for some of the renovation work to commence in early-2026.

- *Facilities Management Updates:*

- Mansfield Middle School (MMS) Main Entrance/Security Improvement Project: Work at MMS continues to advance on several fronts with contractors coordinating a small but important asbestos abatement effort in late-November, once the school building has closed for the day, just prior to the Thanksgiving holiday. The work took place within the elevator shaft, where an asbestos-containing coating was identified on portions of the shaft wall. The material had to be removed to allow for the installation of structural steel that will support the elevator car within the hoistway.
- MMS HVAC Construction Project: The project is progressing on schedule and within budget. Installation work on the third floor and in the gymnasium continues, and contractors have been focused on completing the structural steel supports on the roof that are required for the new rooftop cooling units expected to arrive in mid-December. This rooftop steel work finished in late-November.
- New Animal Shelter Project: Test pits were excavated last month near the site of the existing Animal Control building. This work is intended to confirm whether a new or replacement shelter can be constructed on the same site while allowing the current facility to remain in place and fully operational throughout the construction period. The results of the test pits appear to support the viability of this approach and the overall feasibility of the existing site serving as the home for a future/replacement facility. This information will also help ultimately and inform/determine the sequencing of various aspects of the project as the Town moves forward with its planning.

- *Public Works Updates:*

- As of November 30, the South Eagleville Pedestrian Improvements Project has reached Day 146 of the construction contract. The contract is currently in winter shutdown, pausing the contract duration. Work may continue during winter shutdown. Winter shutdown ends on March 31, 2026. Resurfacing of South Eagleville Road is complete, as are all sidewalk ramps and the concrete sidewalk. The base course of the new 10-foot-wide multi-use trail is

complete. The contractor finished installing underground conduits and foundations that will power decorative sidewalk lighting and the Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), which will enhance visibility and safety along the corridor. Line striping has been completed as well. Installation of the RRFBs is also complete. The primary source of delay continues to be the utility relocations that began in April. Both Eversource and Frontier have started transferring their wires onto new utility poles located within the snow shelf between the roadway and the trail. Once all wires are relocated and the old poles – currently too close to the trail alignment – are removed, the final pavement layer for the multi-use trail can be installed. If utility relocations cannot be completed in time for paving before winter conditions set in, the multi-use trail will be opened to the public in its current base-course condition until final paving can occur in the spring. Staff strongly encourage members of the Council to walk from the Town Hall to the Senior Center and back to fully appreciate the impact of this project.

- Work on the Mansfield Center sidewalk project continues to progress. Portions of the eastern side of Storrs Road—from the former general store to Cemetery Road—and a section behind the stone wall in the Town’s open space have been partially paved. However, several factors, including the DOT permit review process, holiday work restrictions within the state right-of-way, limited availability of a sidewalk paving box, and colder-than-average early winter temperatures, have delayed completion of the remaining paving until spring 2026. This week, crews will place additional material at driveway transitions to ensure safe and accessible temporary conditions throughout the winter months.
- In advance of the first winter event of the season that began the morning of December 2, the crew located snow removal equipment at key locations throughout Town and responded to the event while it was in-process.
- The signalization project at the intersection of Route 275 and Separatist Road is being managed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT). According to CTDOT, the project’s original completion date was scheduled for December 2024. However, procurement challenges related to the signal mast arms and associated equipment have caused delays. The current anticipated completion date is now January 2026.
- The Town Manager’s most recent monthly appearance on WILI-AM with Wayne Norman took place this past Friday, December 7, and can be accessed [here](#).
- The December/January issue of the Town’s bimonthly newsletter was published this past week and can be accessed [here](#).