

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: January 26, 2026
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

- **January 25 Snowstorm Update:** Last night's snowstorm was a significant weather event for the Town of Mansfield that severely limited public use of roadways for a roughly 16-hour timeframe as well as two separate storm-related power outages that impacted residents in the northeastern portion of Town for multiple hours at a time. The Department of Public Works Operations Division activated its full response, with all 22 personnel reporting at 8:00 AM. A total of 21 pieces of equipment were deployed throughout the storm. Prior to the onset of snowfall, DPW crews pretreated all main roads using approximately 80 tons of treated salt. Snow began falling around 8:30 AM and continued steadily throughout the day and into the evening. Accumulations reached at least 17 inches at Town Hall. This storm marked the first major snowfall event – an event exceeding 12 inches – in several years and happened to coincide with our continued onboarding of five newly hired large plow truck drivers. Due to the depth of the snow and the height of snowbanks, smaller pickup plow trucks experienced difficulty, as they were unable to effectively cast snow beyond the banks. Many roads remain narrow as snowbanks continue to encroach on travel lanes. Crews worked continuously through the storm, taking a scheduled rest break at midnight before resuming operations at 3:00 AM. Snow accumulations in Downtown Storrs, as well as in school and municipal parking lots, are substantial. In addition, sight lines at several intersections have been compromised due to the height of the snowbanks. At noon today, the Town will be engaging two hauling contractors to begin removing snow from Downtown Storrs and transporting it to the Transfer Station. At this time, all roads have been pushed back to the extent possible, and DPW crews are continuing work on municipal and school parking lots. As a reminder, the Mansfield Community Center, Mansfield Public Library, and Mansfield Senior Center continue to serve as a warming center for residents during regular operating hours throughout the winter months. The Governor has extended extreme weather protocol into early February.
- With the new Town Council being seated following the municipal elections in November, during its December 8 meeting, the Town Council deliberated on goals for your 2025-2027 term. Materials pertaining to the *Mansfield Tomorrow: Plan of Conservation and Development* and the Council's goals from its 2023-2025 term were reviewed by Council members in advance of the meeting. Based on the substantial and wide-ranging input provided during this session, staff developed proposed draft goals for the Council's consideration. These draft goals were also incorporated into the comprehensive FY 2026/27 budget development guidance that the Town Manager transmitted to all municipal operating departments last month. A proposed list of the Town Council's goals for the 2025-2027 term was presented for consideration and adoption at the January 12 meeting. At this meeting, by consensus, the Council elected to defer further deliberation and final action on the draft goals until its January 26, 2026 meeting to give members additional time to review what had been assembled and propose any specific modifications as appropriate. Council-adopted goals will

ultimately be incorporated into the FY 2026/27 budget book and the Council Policy Index on the Town's website.

- Beginning this past week, the Town Manager, Chief of Shared Services and Administration, and Finance Director have commenced with meetings with department heads to review and discuss their respective FY 2026/27 operating budget and capital item requests.
- As the Council was previously made aware, 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. In anticipation of Jay's forthcoming retirement, we have completed a substantive update to the Director of Parks and Recreation job description and have commenced with the recruitment process. The detailed job advertisement can be [reviewed here](#).
- Sustainable CT featured Mansfield in a social media post for its Community Fund Implementation Spotlight last Monday with data provided to them by Mansfield Trash and Recycling Coordinator Virginia Walton. This is what they highlighted: "Today, we are featuring an inspiring project that took place in Mansfield this fall. This campaign supported the implementation of washable silverware and trays, and the barrels and carts needed to compost at Edwin O. Smith High School. E.O. Smith began composting the first day of the 2025 school year. The food scraps are collected by Mansfield Public Works staff and incorporated into the Mansfield Transfer Station leaf pile, and an average of 43 pounds per day of food scraps are composted. Due to the washable items displacing disposables, it is currently estimated that the school will save over \$16,000 in disposable food service ware purchases per year! Congratulations to Mansfield on this successful campaign and implementation." Mansfield is Gold-Certified with Sustainable CT.
- Municipal Services Campus Master Plan: Town staff continue to advance work with EDM Studios on the municipal services campus master planning effort. As previously reported, a \$250,000 Community Investment Fund (CIF) grant administered by DECD is supporting enhanced architectural and design services, along with community engagement, related to potential redevelopment of the existing municipal services campus, including the possible incorporation of additional functions such as senior services and the public library. For several months now EDM has been coordinating closely with the Town's administration and the managers of our municipal buildings to assimilate detailed information on existing facility conditions, operational constraints, and the long-term space needs that must be addressed to most effectively deliver services to the community. The project is transitioning into more focused schematic and conceptual design work and community-wide stakeholder engagement, which we will be proceeded by a project update with Town Council during its February 9 business meeting. Over the coming weeks, this phase will inform the development of more refined preliminary ("pre-referendum") project scopes, cost estimates, and related debt capacity and tax impact analyses to support informed decision-making in advance of a potential bond referendum in November 2026.
- UConn Golf Practice Facility: As the Council is aware, a proposal by UConn to construct a Golf Practice Facility for its men's varsity golf team has attracted interest and concern among Mansfield residents. On December 16, 2025, a Notice of Scoping was published in the *Connecticut Environmental Monitor* relative to the project. The project would occupy approximately 7 acres of a 22-acre UConn-owned parcel with access from East Road; the existing residence and outbuildings along Storrs Road would remain. The site was formerly used as an experimental plant nursery. The proposal includes site-clearing and earthwork to construct an unlit driving range, chipping and putting areas, gated access from East Road, parking for fewer than 20 vehicles, and an approximately 6,000-square-foot building with offices, locker rooms, equipment storage and repair space, team/flex space, and indoor putting and simulation areas. The facility would be limited to university use and not open to the public. Staff prepared a draft comment letter for review by the Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) at its January 20 meeting, which PZC subsequently voted to approve. This letter is being presented to the Town Council at its January 26 meeting to authorize Mayor Moran to affix her signature, alongside the signature of the PZC Chairperson, for submission to UConn as part of the CT Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) scoping process. Following receipt of the Town's and other comments, UConn will prepare a post-scoping notice that includes responses to comments, an

environmental review checklist, and a determination as to whether a full Environmental Impact Evaluation is required under CEPA.

- During its regular business meeting this evening, Communications Specialist Margaret Chatey will provide the Council with an update on ongoing branding and communications projects/initiatives for the Town of Mansfield and the Mansfield Public Schools.
- Appointments of New Firefighters: As the Council was recently informed, following completion of a competitive recruitment process for Firefighter/EMTs, the Town extended conditional offers to seven candidates. We are very happy to report that all seven individuals who received conditional offers were subsequently cleared and began employment – training and onboarding – with the Town today. A swearing in ceremony for the new Firefighter/EMTs will be held at Mansfield Middle School at 6:00 PM on Thursday, February 5. Six of the seven newly hired members are scheduled to attend the Fire Academy program beginning in February. This will complete the hiring process for the new staff positions associated with the SAFER grant that has been awarded to the Town.
- *Planning and Development Updates:*
 - New Housing Legislation (HB 8002, PA 25-1): To better understand the potential impacts of the new housing legislation recently enacted by the CT General Assembly, Town representatives attended a Housing Forum on January 22, 2026, hosted by the American Planning Association (Connecticut Chapter). Participants included Planning and Zoning Commission Chair Paul Aho, Town Councilor Bill Tomecko, Affordable Housing Committee Chair Paul Stern, and Planning and Development staff. The forum included panelists from the Office of Policy and Management, Councils of Governments, legislative policy analysts, and municipal planners. Staff will continue to keep the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council apprised of relevant provisions of the bill, including housing growth plans, as-of-right housing development in commercial zones, changes to parking minimum requirements, and related implementation issues. Analyses prepared by the [Partnership for Strong Communities](#) and the [Council of Small Towns](#) are available online for reference.
 - Small Cities Community Development Block Grant: The Planning and Development Department has resumed administration of the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Each activity funded with CDBG must meet one of the three national objectives: benefit Low/Moderate Income (LMI), prevention of slums and blight, and urgent need. The Town supports LMI residents through its housing rehabilitation program by offering 0% interest loans for income-eligible homeowners. Loans are repaid upon sale or refinancing and recycled to assist additional households. In addition, the Town has applied for funding under the 2025 Small Cities CDBG round and is awaiting award announcements from the Connecticut Department of Housing. A \$2 million public housing modernization grant request, if funded, would support building and accessibility improvements at Wright's Village.
 - Community Land Trusts and Pro Homes Commissioner Training: Staff has participated in two of three trainings hosted by The Housing Collective on Community Land Trusts. The final webinar, scheduled for February 11, 2026, will focus on land trust governance and management. Jillene Woodmansee attended the Pro-Homes Commissioner Training hosted by Desegregate CT on Thursday, January 15. Topics included HB 8002, inclusionary zoning, and missing middle housing.
 - Open Space Community Input: Mansfield is embarking on an ecological inventory of our forest lands and open spaces as part of the Urban and Community Forestry Grant received from the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) in 2025. We want to learn about what residents and visitors value in our parks and any concerns they have about our forests and natural preserves. We have developed a short [online survey](#) to guide the Town's work to reflect what we value!
 - Invasive Species Control Project to begin at Whetten Woods: In collaboration with Joshua's Trust and USDA NRCS, the Town of Mansfield is engaging ArborActive LLC to assist in Invasive Species Management efforts at Whetten Woods Preserve. Over the course of

February and March 2026, you can expect to see forestry workers with handheld tools removing Japanese Barberry, Multiflora Rose, and other problematic invasive plants throughout the forest. This is the first phase of a three-year forestry management project that will also feature limited timber removal operations and potential experimental Chestnut plantings as part of a broader effort to ensure long-term forest health on public land. Further information about our efforts at Whetten Woods is available on request in the Mansfield Planning Office or by emailing PlanZoneDept@mansfieldct.org.

- Mansfield Tomorrow Plan of Conservation and Development: Work continues on the draft goals, strategies, actions, and plan narrative with an intent to finalize the plan in early 2026. Stay informed and follow the plan's progress [online](#).
- *Mansfield Public Library Updates:* In celebration of the annual "Take Your Child to the Library Day!" on Thursday, February 5, the Mansfield Public Library has planned an engaging and fun-filled program called "Cuddly Critters Meet & Greet" that will take place in Buchanan Auditorium from 5:00-7:00 PM. This is a drop-in program featuring Xen's Critters. We hope individuals and families with you children will come to the Library to get to know a few cute critters, including a bunny, chinchilla, and hedgehog. All families welcome!
- *Town Clerk Updates:* Connecticut Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters are now using new election management software selected by the Connecticut Secretary of the State. TotalVote by KNOWiNK, LLC fully replaces the previous software system and will be used for voter registration, voter data, ballot issuance, and internal election functions for federal, state, and local elections.
- *Mansfield Parks and Recreation Updates:*
 - Winter programming is currently underway, and planning continues for the Parks and Recreation Spring 2026 Program Brochure. The spring brochure is scheduled to be mailed to Mansfield households during the week of March 16 and will also include information on youth summer camps.
 - In collaboration with the Downtown Partnership, Parks and Recreation will host a Kids Night Out program at the Community Center on January 30. While children are being cared for and participating in activities, parents will be encouraged to shop and dine at local businesses. This is timed to coincide with Taste 2 Towns, Restaurant Week in Mansfield and Windham.
 - The Annual Valentine's Dance will be held at the Mansfield Community Center on Saturday, February 7. This is a free community event, though advance registration is strongly encouraged.
 - The next free Community Paint Day will take place on February 5, from 5:00–7:00 PM at Lenard Hall. Pre-registration is required.
 - The next installment of the Youth-Themed Theater Days Series, offered on select Saturdays throughout the winter, will feature a Taylor Swift-themed program on January 31 at Lenard Hall. Pre-registration is required.
 - Park Improvement Projects: Interviews were completed earlier this month with selected firms for ADA and other Park Improvements at Southeast Park and Sunny Acres Park, and we anticipate finalizing a contract for service with the preferred firm in the near future.
 - 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 Updates:*
 - Taste 2 Towns: The Town of Mansfield, the Town of Windham, the Mansfield Downtown Partnership and the Windham Downtown Neighborhood Association are proud to announce that Taste-2-Towns 2026 has begun! Celebrating its fifth year with 28 participating restaurants, the most ever, there is sure to be something for every palate—breakfast, lunch, and dinner Staff are coordinating advertising, social media, and public relations opportunities to promote this region as a dining destination while encouraging local residents to try

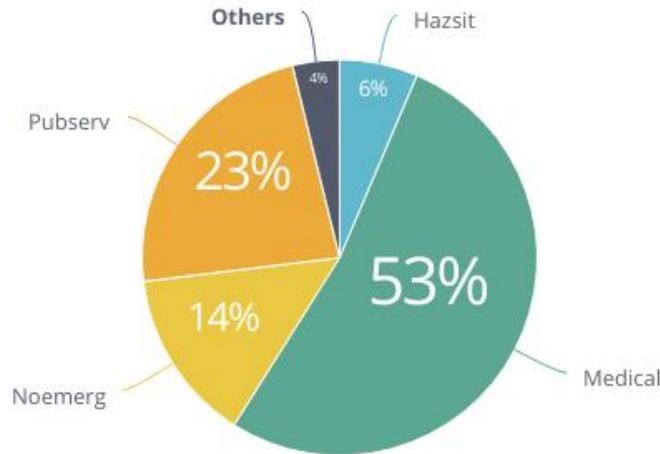
someplace new. Visit www.Taste2Towns.com to see all participating restaurants, sponsors and deals.

- Eastern Connecticut Maple Festival. MDP and Mansfield staff have met with representatives of the Windham Chamber of Commerce which organizes the Eastern Connecticut Maple Festival. The group is working to find the optimum Mansfield location for the two-day event, and details on the date and location will be set soon. For the previous two years, the event has been hosted at E.O. Smith High School and adjacent to Town Hall.

- *Human Services Updates:*

- Veterans Roundtable Discussion: A reminder that on Wednesday, February 4, at 12:45 PM, the Human Services Department will host its first Veterans Roundtable Discussion at the Mansfield Senior Center (303 Maple Road). This open conversation is intended to help the Town better understand the resources, services, and supports local veterans need, as well as identify opportunities to strengthen offerings within the community. While RSVPs are preferred by February 3, all are welcome to attend. To RSVP, please contact the Human Services Outreach Worker at 860-487-9871 or Gardinera@mansfieldct.org.
- Food Pantry System Improvements: The Mansfield Human Services Department has enhanced its food pantry system to improve the accuracy of usage data and strengthen its ability to connect residents with needed services. Between January 12 and January 22, the Town's two pantry locations recorded a combined total of 22 visits. During this period, staff engaged directly with seven households to provide information on available programs and connect them with additional community resources. Of the total visits, eight occurred at the satellite pantry at Mansfield Public Library, resulting in four new service connections, with the remaining visits taking place at the main pantry location on Maple Road. Residents who may need assistance with food access or other financial supports are encouraged to contact Mansfield Human Services at 860-429-3315 to learn more about available programs.
- Mansfield Senior Center staff will participate in a half-day professional development conference on the afternoon of January 29. The training, offered through the Connecticut Association of Senior Center Personnel (CASCP), focuses on "Senior Bullying: Building a Community of Respect." During this time, the Senior Center will remain open and staffed by the Human Services Department to ensure uninterrupted services for residents.
- The Maple Road Café will be open on three consecutive upcoming Fridays (February 6, 13, and 20) from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM, or while supplies last. Registration is not required, and items are served à la carte. The Café is open to the public and does not require Senior Center membership. For additional information, please contact the Senior Center at 860-429-0262.
- Youth Services' collaboration with Mansfield Public Schools (MPS) remains strong. The Youth Services Supervisor and Social Worker recently presented the Community Cares Program at a Board of Education meeting, highlighting the breadth of partnerships and supports Youth Services provides to MPS students and families.
- Youth Services recently launched a new Mother–Daughter Circle program, which began last week. This co-facilitated, four-week program brings caregivers and their preteen or teenage daughters together to strengthen relationships through connection-building, shared experiences, and creative expression. The curriculum emphasizes empathy, healthy boundaries, mutual support, and identity development, and early participant feedback has been very positive.
- Youth Services Supervisor Sarah DeLuca and Prevention Specialist Maddie DuBaldo are attending the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) National Leadership Forum and Conference in National Harbor, Maryland, from February 2–5. The conference focuses on evidence-based prevention programming, national best practices, and emerging research and trends in youth prevention. Staff look forward to bringing new ideas and strategies back to Mansfield.

- Youth Services, in collaboration with Coventry Youth Services, is offering a free Safe at Home class on Tuesday, February 17, from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM at Booth and Dimock Library in Coventry. This class is designed for youth in grades 4–6 and provides guidance on staying safe when home alone, including developing safe habits, preventing unsafe situations, and responding to emergencies such as power outages or severe weather. Families interested in registering their child are encouraged to contact Mansfield Youth Services at 860-429-3319 to reserve a spot.
- **Fire and Emergency Services Updates:**
 - Mansfield Fire and Emergency Services responded to 78 calls over the past two weeks (January 10, 2026 – January 23, 2026) with the breakdown by type as follows:



- **Facilities Management Updates:**
 - Mansfield Elementary School (MES) Cafeteria Sound Mitigation Project: An addendum to the sound mitigation RFP was issued to address bidder questions. Responses were provided, and the bid due date was extended to January 29. Submissions will ultimately be reviewed with the School Building Committee in anticipation of selecting a contractor.
 - MES Building Generator: Facilities staff are in the process of obtaining proposals to expand the number of outlets and equipment connected to emergency power panels backed up by the building generator. Recent testing confirmed that relatively few outlets are currently supported during generator operation, creating operational challenges during student arrival and dismissal, as well as for kitchen operations during meal preparation. Preliminary analysis indicates sufficient generator capacity, and staff are developing a plan and soliciting proposals to improve emergency power coverage.
 - Mansfield Middle School (MMS) Main Entrance and Elevator Project: Elevator car materials arrived last week, and technicians are actively assembling the car, with work expected to continue over the next two weeks. Once installation is complete, remaining masonry, drywall, and painting work will be completed to finish the elevator landing areas. State elevator inspections are being coordinated to occur shortly after final construction activities are complete.
 - MMS HVAC Improvements: Final ductwork installation was completed on January 19, 2026. HVAC controls programming is underway this week and will continue into next week, completing the installation phase. Comprehensive system testing will occur when warmer weather arrives in the spring.
 - Historic Town Hall Project: Floor refinishing work at the Historic Town Hall and Administrative Building (both of which are occupied and operated by Mansfield Historical Society), originally scheduled for Friday, January 23, has been rescheduled to next week due to anticipated

weather conditions. Remaining exterior parking lot paving will be completed in the spring once warmer weather allows.

- *Public Works Updates:*
 - Snow and Ice Operations: Winter conditions have remained active. Since the last report, Public Works responded to four additional plowable events totaling approximately 27 inches of snowfall, bringing the season total to 38 inches, along with one additional treating event. Prior to the January 25 storm, which will have significantly increased these totals, DPW operations had used approximately 1,422 tons of bulk salt and 227 bags of salt. Snow hauling was completed twice in the downtown area (second event ongoing) and twice at Mansfield Elementary School (second event ongoing). Crews also dedicated time following events to clean, inspect, and maintain trucks and equipment to ensure continued readiness.
 - South Eagleville Road Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project: The project remains in winter shutdown, though limited coordination work continues. The contractor is working with Eversource to install the electrical meter needed to power sidewalk lighting and rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs). Shipment of the light poles was delayed due to a manufacturer issue, with delivery now anticipated by February 8. Installation will occur as soon as materials arrive and conditions allow.
 - Stump Grinding: One road crew has resumed stump grinding at municipal buildings and parks, with approximately 50 stumps removed to date.
 - Transfer Station Operations: Crews are clearing and removing material in the lower pit at the Transfer Station to create space for brush piles and wood chips, as well as to screen loam and gravel for use in next year's drainage improvement projects.
 - Route 275 and Separatist Road Signalization Project: This project is being managed by the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Recent communication with CTDOT did not yield a specific construction schedule. The next phase involves erecting the steel components for the signal mast arms. The contractor is tentatively scheduled to begin work at Old Lyme intersections later this month, weather permitting, with Mansfield work to follow.
 - Ongoing Maintenance: Public Works crews continue to replace missing signage, respond to resident service requests, patch potholes, and collect wood from downed or cut trees throughout Town roadways.
- The February/March issue of the Town's bimonthly newsletter is currently in development with an anticipated publication date of February 2, 2026.