

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: John C. Carrington, Interim Town Manager
Date: April 27, 2020
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

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

Council Business

- *Proposed FY 2020/21 Operating Budget and CIP* –Residents can find a schedule of budget meetings on the Town's website and can access information regarding the current year budget and next year's proposed budget on our *Open Mansfield* financial transparency platform: <http://open.mansfieldct.org>.
- *Town Manager Recruitment* – Need a decision on the recruitment brochure.

Departmental Reports

- ***Animal Control***
 - We are following the NACA protocol and the guidelines form State Animal Control: <https://www.nacanet.org/naca-statements-on-covid-19/>
 - Shelter closed to the public to minimize risk to staff, Telephone triage for calls to determine urgency and to give advice. Essential services in the field only
 - Community outreach program: Take pets into protective custody when their owner is hospitalized suddenly. Pet food pantry
- ***Board of Education:***
 - The schools continue with distance learning and meal distribution. Highlights include: Southeast School parades with police, fire, and ambulances were held last week with many residents coming out to wave them on.
 - We continue to serve about 100 families on each meal distribution day. Added to the distributions recently have been activity packs and pizza making kits from Youth Services.
 - Teachers are using a combination of on-line, video, and synchronous learning to provide instruction and learning tasks to all students. Continue weekly family contact.
- ***Building & Housing:***
 - Continue to provide housing inspection services but have had a slightly increased volume of customers asking to postpone. This will have a negative effect on revenue in the short term.
 - Building code enforcement function remains status quo but I do expect a drop in activity due to financial consideration again with a negative revenue effect.
 - I have assigned a long-term project to inspectors to use any down time to scan our historic files and input the data into MAGNET.

- ***Downtown Partnership:***
 - Staff and Board members are directly reaching out to businesses to offer support, share information, and learn about their experiences
 - Continuing to provide information on local, state, and federal resources for businesses on our websites, through email, and via social media
 - Promoting businesses via our websites, social media, email blasts, outreach to media, and new “Spend & Win!” gift card giveaway contest (to be launched this week)

- ***Eastern Highland Health District:***
 - Investigating all confirmed cases of COVID-19. To date they have completed 66 case contact investigations, with 49 still active. Reviewing options to ramp up staffing in conjunction with the launch of the new statewide contact tracing software next month.
 - Receiving and distributing Personal Protective Equipment to area private health care providers on a weekly basis. Distributed approximately two pallets of material to 10 area healthcare providers.
 - Conducting exposure risk assessments for local area first responders, and provide other infection control guidance as needed.

- ***Facilities:***
 - Custodial crew continues their cleaning efforts as well as a lot of painting projects
 - Maintenance replacing cabinets at the Middle School
 - Maintenance working on many small projects they can get done as buildings are closed.

- ***Finance:***
 - All Board of Assessment Appeals reviews are now scheduled for virtual meetings
 - Staying current on all grant extension and spending requirements for education grants
 - Responding to State requests for financial information related to COVID spending

- ***Fire:***
 - Currently assisting the Town of Willington FD with an ambulance and staff while they have staff out on quarantine. Currently schedule for 1-2 shifts for two weeks. (being reimbursed)
 - County/Area Fire Chiefs are working on a draft plan & MOU to be able to share resources and staffing beyond the normal mutual aid response.
 - Continue to respond to 911 calls and provide PPE and procedures to protect our first responders.

- ***Emergency Services:***
 - Coordinate Town PPE order requests to DEMHS
 - Disseminate information from DEMHS to Town Departments related to Presidential Disaster Declaration; working with Finance Department to submit required paperwork
 - Attend State and Local conference calls for updated information

- ***Human Resources:***
 - Recruiting efforts for Finance Department Head position continue.
 - Continue to assist with unemployment questions and responding to unemployment claims.

- Email communications sent to Town Employees, Downtown Partnership Employees and Eastern Highland Health District Employees to update them on changes to Anthem coverages due to COVID-19.
- **Human Services:**
 - Nutrition support for food insecure and homebound senior households through food pantry, Meals-on-Wheels delivery and Mobile Foodshare and coordination with other food pantries and faith-based organizations
 - Transportation for seniors and disabled adults to medical appointments that are necessary and in which there is no other alternative
 - Mental health support through counseling, parent and caregiver support, telephone reassurance and wellness checks, crisis intervention and referral.
 - Case management, information, advocacy and referral for those in need of assistance accessing critical services and programs – i.e.: financial assistance, food insecurity, healthcare access
- **Information Technology:**
 - Mansfield has had a high viewership for streaming of public meetings in support of social distancing via <https://mansfieldct.gov/video> (many meetings have had 100+ viewers per meeting).
 - Work-at-home has been very successful in support of social distancing with 150 to 200 staff remote access connections per day and 40+ GoToMeeting or Zoom meetings per week.
 - Schools are very actively using distance learning with students, most notably Video Conferencing, Google Classroom, and PLearning; as well as 400+ Chromebooks loaned to students who lack technology.
- **Library:**
 - Mailing seeds to people who request them from the seed library.
 - Working on a phased opening plan with no set dates.
 - Developing and expanding online programming.
- **Parks & Recreation:**
 - Staff continue to offer a variety of online exercise and activity options. A weekly “Boredom Buster” series will continue with “May Day” activities followed by “Signs of Hope”. Check website for details and updates.
 - Staff are contacting all Community Center members to see how they are doing and provide information.
 - Summer program brochure is in the final production stage and is scheduled to be mailed to residents on or around May 7th.
- **Planning and Development:**
 - Planning and Development continues to accept and process permit applications.
 - Staff is working with EHHD on policies and procedures to allow housing rehabilitation projects to resume.
 - Members of the public are encouraged to email planzonedept@mansfieldct.org or call 860.429.3330 if they need any assistance.

- **Public Works:**
 - Since the last update, an additional 25 Trees have been taken down by our Crew which included damage from two wind storms and one snow event.
 - Repaving of the Four Corners Sewer Project will begin on Monday and will take approximately 2 weeks to complete (Weather Dependent)
 - Have altered and staggered schedules to reduce the number of individuals at one at time at the Garage Property.
 - Continue with small teams utilizing social distancing, one person per vehicle, and assigned vehicles.
 - Changed accepted payments at the Transfer Station to credit/debit cards only along with new payment terminal that minimizes common touch surfaces.

- **Resident Troopers:**
 - In communication with UConn regarding off campus student population to ensure that their needs are met.
 - Troopers instructed to maintain a high level of visibility within the Mansfield community while continuing to respond to calls of service.
 - The CSP "calls for service limitations" are still in effect in an attempt to assist Troopers to reduce the possibility of an exposure of COVID-19. The Troop C desk personnel and dispatcher are managing these limitations. (Example: a complaint of annoying and/or obscene phone calls will be reported via telephone or email, a Trooper will not be responding to the residence unless necessary. At which time the complainant would be asked to step outside to speak with the Trooper with "social distancing" standards being observed.)

- **Town Clerk:**
 - Essential and routine functions continue; essential public-facing services are conducted by appointment through the drop box slot; detailed operations plan is posted on the Town Clerk's webpage.
 - Office hours are reduced and coverage is staggered; routine customer service, archival and special projects are worked on from home.
 - We continue to stay current with Executive Orders and their impact on our work.

Upcoming Events

- The Mansfield Bear Hunt continues. Here's a safe way to get outside and have a little fun while we practice social distancing. Find bears in windows of local businesses, schools and town buildings. See how many you can find from the car and stay safe. Put a teddy bear in your window or place a cutout in a plastic bag and tape it to your mailbox. Take a picture and post it on social media or send a copy to the Mansfield Public Library (mansfieldlibrary@mansfieldct.org) and it will be added to their Facebook album so everyone can see. Don't forget to use the hashtag #MansfieldBearHunt.