

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: John C. Carrington, Interim Town Manager
Date: April 13, 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>.

Departmental Reports

- ***Board of Education:***
 - Schools are now closed until May 20. School at Home is operational across the grades.
 - Families receive a phone call from a teacher weekly to check-in and to gather feedback to help us continually refine our efforts.
 - School meal distribution continues at 5 sites with roughly 100 families picking up meals on each distribution day (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday). Children receive food for 5 breakfasts and 5 lunches over the course of the week.
 - Schools are employing many strategies to maintain a sense of community including school video messages, messages from all staff, parades, and more.
 - MPS has an active website with resources and information for families
- ***Building & Housing:***
 - We continue to provide housing inspection services but have had a slightly increased volume of customers asking to postpone. I have advised staff to approve these requests and clearly document the reason and update our schedule so we return at a later date. This will have a negative effect on revenue in the short term. We may also need to consider overtime in the future to maintain our implementation schedule as required by ordinance.
 - 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.
 - Administrative assistants are currently working from home and come to Town Hall on a very limited basis.
 - 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.
 - We will assist other departments if needed as assigned by the Town Manager.

- **Downtown Partnership:**

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership continues assisting businesses throughout town in a variety of ways as they navigate the global COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts to date include:

- Near-daily email updates to businesses with announcements, news, and information about local, state, and federal response efforts
- Near-daily updates on Partnership website including maintaining a Business Resource Center page with information about funding opportunities, employee assistance, and more: mansfieldmdp.org/coronavirus/resourcecenter
- Maintaining a list of all restaurants in town that are open and offering take-out, curbside pick-up, and/or delivery: downtownstorrs.org/dine/togo
- Maintaining a list of other types of businesses in town that are open and serving residents: mansfieldmdp.org/openforbusiness
- One-on-one outreach to individual businesses to assess their needs and to inform them of available resources. E-mails and calls were completed to all Downtown Storrs businesses (90 contacts) by April 3. On-going outreach by Partnership staff and the Board of Directors.
- Outreach to major commercial property owners in Downtown Storrs and throughout Mansfield to update them on the local response and to keep informed of their plans and responses. Letters to the Downtown Storrs commercial property owners to thank them for their support and encourage relief for Downtown Storrs businesses were sent on the part of the Partnership Board of Directors the week of April 6.
- Attending webinars and conference calls with state officials and state-wide non-profit agencies to review assistance options for businesses and to stay up-to-date with latest guidance on federal funding opportunities

- **Eastern Highland Health District:**

- Surveillance - 58 confirmed cases in the EHHD (6 in Mansfield)
- Case contact investigations – 23 completed, 25 active
- UConn Student Health and Wellness is now has testing available for students
- Our Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer Unit added 21 new members in the past three week, with approximately 30 memberships pending
- We continue to update and provide infection control and social distancing guidance to first responders, towns, and other partners

- **Facilities:**

Custodial Staff

- Working on some items that would be in our normal summer clean time frame.
- They continue to clean and disinfect after staff have been in their areas
- They continue with more frequent wipe downs of high touch areas i.e. doorknobs and desks.
- Painting in buildings

Maintenance Staff:

- Repaired the leaking pipes at MCC
- Working on water damage in two family changing rooms at MCC
- Worked on adding office space Fire Station 307
- Working on adding air-conditioning and heat at the three elementary schools Libraries.
- Installing new cabinet at Daycare.

- **Finance:**
 - Continue daily operations for purchasing, payroll, accounts payable and financial reporting
 - Preparation for Budget presentations and requests for information
 - Numerous webinars on executive orders, impacts to school districts as well as municipalities
 - Planning & implementation of executive orders
 - Monitor financial position of all partners

- **Fire:**
 - Main priority is to be available to respond to 911 calls and keep our personnel as safe as possible.
 - We have responded to 38 EMS calls for individuals with COVID-19 symptoms in the last 3 weeks.
 - Currently have 2- FT Firefighters on a 14 Day Quarantine due to a potential exposure. Also have 1 PT Firefighter on a 14 Day Quarantine from an exposure from his outside FT Job.
 - Working with EM and DPH to attempt to obtain PPE. Current supplies are good for approximately 2 weeks at current usage, will be an issue if things increase. Working for plans for any possible sharing with local departments.
 - Community & Staff support for making Gowns out of Tyvek. (Willards donation)
 - Trying to coordinate/establish temporary housing for first responders. Currently have a plan for the community center for limited scope (non sick)
 - Working with Chief's from Willimantic and UConn for possible staff sharing plan if needed.

- **Emergency Services:**
 - Coordinate Town PPE order request 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
 - Working with business owners with any concerns
 - Assisting Eastern Highland Health District with any needs

- **Human Resources:**
 - Family First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) April 1 effective date. Education for HR department to understand the Act and how it would apply to Town employees. Creating appropriate leave forms for either Paid Sick Leave or EFMLA. Responding to email inquiries by employees.
 - Continue to assist staff with unemployment application questions and responding to unemployment claims.
 - Recruiting efforts for Finance Department Head position.
 - Constant communication with Fire Chief regarding first responders and potential exposure to COVID-19.
 - Email communications sent to Town Employees, Downtown Partnership Employees and Eastern Highland Health District Employees to update them on resources/services available due to COVID-19.
 - Attending multiple webinars put on by Anthem, Lockton, USI and CIRMA regarding updated and continually changing information on 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.
- Online social, wellness and creative programming for all ages to prevent social isolation and promote community connectedness.
- Case management, information, advocacy and referral for those in need of assistance accessing critical services and programs – ie: financial assistance, food insecurity, healthcare access

- **Information Technology:**

The IT Department has been very active providing technology solutions and support. Most notably:

- Public Meetings are broadcast live (and on-demand) via <https://mansfieldct.gov/video> and Charter Spectrum Cable Channel 191.
- Hosting 150 to 200 staff remote access connections per day to support social distancing.
- Averaging 39 Go-To-Meeting or Zoom meetings per week for Staff Meetings and Committees.
- Schools are using distance learning options, most notably Zoom Conferencing, Google Classroom, and PLearning; as well as 389 devices loaned to students who lack technology.
- IT Staff have developed effective and efficient methods to provide fully remote technical support to staff.
- Collaborating with Town Manager's Office on the <https://mansfieldct.gov/covid-19> homepage as well as other Department's communications efforts.
- Rapid technology technical support as Departments and Buildings adjust their work and services (IT Staff are very active and focused on getting solutions and support to users).

- **Library:**

- Selecting and purchasing online materials to meet rising demand. We purchase new materials daily.
- Assessing the flood of free digital resources currently being offered before recommending them to the public.
- Expanding access (via online library card registrations) to electronic materials and databases.
- Providing support to the schools' distance learning efforts.

- **Parks & Recreation:**

- Continue to monitor park use. Parks, natural areas, and trails remain open for public use. Social distancing notices have been posted at most major trail heads. Playgrounds and Skate Park are closed.
- A variety on online programming is available through the Parks and Rec. website. Programming includes activity options to do at home, links to suggested online activities, and exercise programs. Silver Sneakers programs online will be added this week. Music lessons and select exercise classes are being offered via Zoom.
- All Parks and Rec. facilities (Community Center, Lenard Hall, and park buildings) remain closed. Some maintenance projects, deep cleaning, painting, and flooring upgrades are occurring at the Community Center during the shut-down.
- Summer program planning is underway. The summer program brochure is in production and is scheduled to be mailed to area residents in early May.

- **Planning and Development:**

The Planning Department has revised its operating procedures in accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Orders 7B and 7I. Details on COVID-19 operating procedures are posted on the Department's webpage (<https://mansfieldct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8266/2020-03-31-COVID-19-Revised-Procedures-Final?bidId=>). At this time, meetings of boards and commissions are generally limited to regulatory bodies such as the PZC, PZC Regulatory Review Committee, IWA, ZBA and HDC. These meetings may be cancelled if there are no pending applications requiring action. Advisory committees and commissions will only meet if there is a time-sensitive item that needs to be addressed. All public hearings and decisions of regulatory bodies are being posted on the Town's Legal Notices webpage. Zoning and Inland Wetlands permits continue to be reviewed and processed; and enforcement activities are proceeding as needed.

- **Public Works:**

- 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.
- Since the last update, an additional 50 Trees have been taken down by our Crew or Contractor.

- **Resident Troopers:**

- The Mansfield Resident Troopers are continually being vigilant and being proactively visible to the residents in Town. We continue to utilize "social distancing" precautions when responding to calls for service.
- The Colonel of the CSP has currently ordered each Trooper to wear a "surgical mask" with any interactions with the public until further notice. We are continuing to utilize the N-95 masks during high risk calls for service.
- We have assisted with the Food Bank deliveries and we plan to continue this practice until our presence is not needed. We will continue to be working with the elementary schools during their "parade" functions for their students in the up-coming weeks.
- All civilian entry to the Resident Troopers office has been restricted until further notice due to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Town Clerk:**

(See Attached)

Upcoming Events

- *Storrs Farmers Market* – The next Storrs Winter Market is scheduled for April 18, 2020 on the lawn of the Mansfield Public Library. Please continue to check the website for information about opening or rescheduling: storrsfarmersmarket.org.