

**MEMO**

**To:** Town Council  
**CC:** Town Employees  
**From:** John C. Carrington, Interim Town Manager  
**Date:** August 10, 2020  
**Subject:** **Town Manager's Report**



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

**Departmental Reports**

• ***Town Manager:***

Please join me in welcoming new employees and congratulating those promoted in 2020 thus far:

- **Frederick Vanston and Thomas Mieldzioc** were promoted from part-time to full-time firefighters/EMTs for the Town of Mansfield on January 5, 2020. Both Firefighter Vanston and Firefighter Mieldzioc graduated from the Fire Academy on July 31, 2020.
- **Luciann Norton** joined the Finance Department as the Payroll Administrator on February 10, 2020. Luciann attended the University of Connecticut to obtain her Bachelors in Economics and the Arizona State University to obtain a graduate degree in Education. She has most recently worked with area businesses in various finance positions.
- **Holly Schaefer** joined the Town of Mansfield as the Director of Human Resources on February 24, 2020. Holly received her Master's Degree in Human Resources Management from the University of Connecticut. She most recently worked as the Human Resources Manager for W. B. Mason and held previous Human Resources positions for HealthyCT Inc., United Health Group, Aetna and Bank of America.
- **Anisah Richardson** joined the Town of Mansfield as a Recreation Coordinator for the Mansfield Community Center overseeing programming for Lenard Hall as well as the Childcare facility on April 6, 2020. Anisah had previously worked for the YMCA as the Dance Coordinator and graduated from Syracuse University with a Bachelor's in Management.
- **Jillene Woodmansee** was promoted from the Planning Specialist position to Planner I on May 26, 2020. Jillene has also recently successfully completed the Municipal Inland Wetlands Agency Comprehensive Training Program.
- **Audrey Conrad** joined the Town of Mansfield as the part-time Human Resources Specialist on July 6, 2020. She has many years of experience working in Human Resources for the Town of Mansfield.
- **Kristen Zadnik and Sarah Dufresne**, as of the passing of the FY 2020-2021 budget, have changed from part-time to full-time status. Kristen Zadnik works as the Administrative Assistant for the Resident State Trooper's Office, and Sarah Dufresne works as the Early Childhood Services Coordinator for Youth Services.

- **Yvette Gauthier** joined the Town of Mansfield as the IT Department's full-time Administrative Assistant on July 6, 2020. Previously, she worked as the part-time Office Assistant for the Department.
- **Charmaine Bradshaw-Hill** will be joining the Town of Mansfield as the new Director of Finance replacing the long-term current Director, Cherie Trahan, who is retiring after many years of service to the Town. She arrives on August 21, 2020 with experience working as the Business Manager for Windsor Locks Public Schools since 2018 and prior to that, the non-profit EdAdvance. She received a Master's in Business Administration from Kenan Flager Business School at the University of North Carolina and a Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration from the University of Connecticut.  
We are so appreciative of all of our employees' continual dedication and hard work for the Town of Mansfield and welcome all those who have joined us in 2020!

- ***Mansfield Board of Education:***

Superintendents recently received guidance on COVID19 infection rate data for use when determining whether schools should remain open for students. County-based data are provided weekly. Tolland County infection rates as of last week were at 1.5 people for 100,000 residents. When infection rates are below 10 per 100,000 it is suggested that school be fully open. In addition, schools should consider the ability to implement all of the mitigation strategies recommended such as physical distancing, mask wearing, cleaning and sanitizing, and providing the appropriate ventilation systems. Mansfield Public Schools is prepared to implement all of the recommended mitigation strategies.

Concern regarding the impact of the returning UCONN students was also considered as a decision for reopening schools was made. On Tuesday, August 4, the Superintendent held a Board of Education meeting and shared the plan for reopening. The plan was endorsed by the Board of Education. Mansfield schools will reopen in the hybrid model using a mix of in class and distance learning for one month. Students will be assigned to two groups, each group will attend school two days a week. All students will be supported with distance learning 3 days a week. Students with individualized education plans for English language learners who would be adversely affected by reduced schooling may attend school five days a week. All parents may opt in to remote learning five days a week if they would rather not send their children to school. On or about October 1, a decision will be made to continue in the hybrid model or move to full in-person schooling. Schools may switch to distance learning at any time should public health data necessitate such a move.

- ***Downtown Partnership:***

- Launching "Mask Up, Mansfield!" public awareness campaign this week to encourage downtown residents and visitors to wear a mask, maintain a distance of six feet from others, and wash hands frequently; campaign will include physical signs, social media, and other outreach
- Continuing to promote #MansfieldSummerFun along with the Parks & Rec, Senior Center, Youth Services, and Library; the theme for August is "Your Place to Grow: From farm to garden, enjoy the bounty and beauty of Mansfield!" See more at [mansfieldct.gov/summer](http://mansfieldct.gov/summer)
- Continuing support of all Mansfield businesses by communicating guidance from the state for phased reopening, funding and business development opportunities, and federal news and updates

- **Facilities:**
  - Set up water stations for public after Storm Isaias
  - Help set up cooling and charging stations
  - Working on building reopening's, schools and town buildings
  
- **Human Resources**
  - Recruiting for Assessor – 8 other towns in CT have assessors openings, making finding candidates challenging
  - Fielding questions from working parents, as schools reopening plans are announced. Leaving parents trying to balance work & school especially in a hybrid school model
  - In partnership with the Finance Department communication sent to employees regarding moving pay day from Wednesday to Friday starting the end of September. Communication went extremely well receiving only 1 question from an employee.
  - Travel Guidelines sent to Town employees regarding travel to Affected States and the current State regulations.
  
- **Parks & Recreation**
  - As a result of Storm Isaias, the Community Center opened as a respite/cooling/charging location for residents without power on Wednesday, August 5th. Showering was made available beginning Thursday, Aug. 6. The Center will remain open for these services as long as residents are without power.
  - The Community Center has been open since June 22 under the Governor's Phase 2 re-opening guidelines. Re-opening has gone very well, except that a limited number of members have taken advantage of the opportunity. Reservations have increased by 26 percent since the first week. We are now averaging 130 visitors per day.
  - Residents are encouraged to check the Parks and Recreation Department website for details and updates on program and activity options. Staff are in the process of finalizing the fall program brochure.
  
- **Public Works:**
  - Since the last Town Manager Report, the Public Works Department has addressed 28 additional trees from July 27<sup>th</sup> to August 3<sup>rd</sup> (Tropical Storm Isaias). At the worst, 72 locations in Town had trees down that prevented traffic flow of approximately 30 roads. By the following morning, the crew removed trees from 29 locations and were able to make all but 4 locations passable.
  - All trees that came down during the storm had leaves on them and none were previously identified for removal. The Town has a considerable backlog of trees that have been identified for removal and are dead as a result of the Emerald Ash Borer, Gypsy Moths, and drought. These trees, along with others that we are constantly being made aware have been keeping our crew and contractor busy. As this backlog is addressed over the next 5 years, the next trees that will be addressed are those that are diseased and dying, which will take at least 5 more years to take down.
  - The Drainage Project on Hillyndale Road is moving forward with paving which is scheduled for the 4<sup>th</sup> week of August.
  
- **Town Clerk: August 11, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary Update**
  - For the first time in Connecticut's history, a portion of absentee ballots were mailed by a State-contracted mail house rather than by Town Clerks. The decision to utilize a mail house was made by the State in an effort to assist Town Clerks with the unprecedented number of

absentee ballot requests that Clerks have received. Unfortunately, the process has not been smooth: 1) ballots were mailed by the mail house one week later than statutorily required compressing the process timeline; 2) per State guidance, applications continued to be entered by Town Clerks for ballot issuance by the mail house during the week of July 27th however, the mail house did not mail ballots out for the applications entered that week. Town Clerks were not told that they would have to go back and issue ballots for the applications entered during the week of July 27th until August 3rd, causing Town Clerks across the entire state to work feverishly to issue ballots to voters in time for their ballots to be received, returned, and counted (the Mansfield Town Clerk's Office successfully issued and mailed these ballots on August 4th); 3) Tropical Storm Isaias disrupted the postal service considerably during a crucial time of election mail exchange resulting in delayed deliveries of applications and ballots between voters and Town Clerks

- As of Friday, August 7th, Town Clerk's Office staff have processed over **1900** applications for absentee ballots for the Primary – over three times as many as were issued for the 2016 Presidential Election. As of 10AM Monday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, there are still over 1000 ballots in Mansfield that have not yet been returned to the Town Clerk's Office.
- It is crucial that voters follow the ballot instructions *exactly* otherwise their ballot is not allowed to be counted. **We are encouraging Mansfield voters to deliver their completed ballot via the locked and secured official ballot drop box located outside the Town Hall door closest to the Tax Collector and Town Clerk offices BEFORE August 11th.** Early ballot return will help the Clerks as they work to sort and prepare the returned ballots for the Registrars. Voters have until 8PM on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 to return their ballot to the ballot drop box. Executive Order 7MMM issued today allows ballots postmarked August 11, 2020 and received in the mail by August 13, 2020 to be counted. Ballots received after August 13, 2020 or postmarked after August 11, 2020 will not be counted.

### **Upcoming Events**

- *Storrs Farmers Market* – Storrs Farmers Market is open every Saturday from 3:00 to 6:00 PM on the front lawn of the Mansfield Town Hall from May through November. Learn more at [storrsfarmersmarket.org](http://storrsfarmersmarket.org).