

## MEMO

**To:** Town Council  
**CC:** Town Employees  
**From:** Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager  
**Date:** February 22, 2021  
**Subject:** **Town Manager's Report**

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

### **Departmental Reports**

#### **• *Town Manager & Human Resources:***

- As has been widely reported, residents who are 65-74 became eligible for the COVID-19 approximately two weeks ago as part of the next step of the Phase 1b rollout. In an effort to ensure that these residents are informed of the vaccination scheduling options and supported through the registration process, Human Services staff as well as members of the Human Resources Department and the Public Library are providing support with VAMS registration, navigating the appointment scheduling process, and arranging for transportation to vaccination appointments. Information outlining how the Town of Mansfield is prepared to help residents continues to be pushed out by social media, the Town's website, and "reverse 911" calls so that families and friends of seniors are also aware of the process.
- First round interviews with candidates for the permanent Fire Chief position are taking place this week. Candidates will initially meet with a panel comprised of human resources personnel, a member of the Mansfield Fire Department command staff, the DPW Director, a Fire Chief from another nearby CT municipality, and former Mansfield Fire Chief Dagan. We very much appreciate these individuals volunteering their time and expertise to help evaluate the candidates. At present, it is anticipated that semi-finalist (second round) interviews will take place the week of March 1 and a final selection (conditional hire) will be made by the week of March 8 following one-on-one interviews with the Town Manager.
- The Town is still in the process of filling a full-time Finance Manager/Treasurer position within the Finance Department.
- The FY2022 budget development process continues to progress according to the roadmap followed in past years. We remain on track to have a complete and accurate approximation of the bottom line of the budget by the end of the month based on department submissions, and the Town Manager will subsequently prepare his complete budget recommendations (which will be presented to the Town Council in late-March), incorporating any proposed adjustments to the department submissions, in consultation with the Finance Director.
- The Town Manager has been invited to participate on the WILI AM & FM radio program hosted by Wayne Norman in the next few weeks. The Town Manager in Windham has a standing/regular interview segment on this program, and we may pursue a similar opportunity if there is mutual interest. It would provide another means in which to disseminate important information as this program is listened to by a large number of Mansfield residents.
- The Taste of Mansfield initiative aims to connect the community through local food. This week, the Town Manager will be leading off a Facebook Live event, coordinated by our

partners at the University of Connecticut's Extension program, to promote CSA sign-up week in Connecticut. CSA stands for Community Supported Agriculture and enables consumers to purchase in late winter a share of a farmers' production for the coming growing season. A box of fresh vegetables and other locally products is then picked up each week, directly from the farmer, throughout the season. The Taste of Mansfield has produced a video about each of four CSAs in Mansfield which will be featured in the Facebook live event, tentatively scheduled for Wednesday. The Town Manager will also announce the availability of subsidized CSA shares through the Mansfield Farms to Families program for families who may not find a CSA share affordable within their budget. This program will be administered through the Town of Mansfield's Human Services Department.

- Additional information about a new citizen engagement program called the Local Government Academy that is being proposed by the Town Manager is included in the agenda packet.
- The Town Manager is presently evaluating the merits of pursuing a "refresh" update to the Mansfield Tomorrow Plan (the most recent Plan of Conservation and Development that adopted in for the 2015-2024 time frame) and concurrently engaging in a department-level strategic planning effort during FY 2021/2022 to ensure that the goals and targeted outcomes of municipal department operations are in alignment with the Plan. This process would of course be highly collaborative in nature and engage a wide range of pertinent stakeholders both internal and external to the municipal organization. The Town Manager initiated a similar department-level strategic planning process in Enfield, NH that was seen as highly successful and beneficial to the Town's long-term planning and operations. To this end, the Town Manager is considering inviting an experienced subject matter expert in the field of municipal strategic planning to meet with the Council at a future meeting to explore the concept further.
- Human Resources completed sending to Town Employees the Affordable Care Act form 1095-C (proof of medical insurance) in recent days and the department also assisted the Mansfield Board of Education and Regional School District 19 in distribution of these forms to their employees.

- ***Mansfield Public Schools & Region 19:***

- The Superintendent of Mansfield Schools submitted her FY 2021/2022 budget recommendations earlier this year and the Board of Education subsequently voted to adopt its proposed budget on February 11 following a series of budget workshops. The FY 2021/2022 budget of \$24,289,950 represents a 2.29% increase over the FY 2020/2021 budget. Detailed budget recommendations can be found in their totality here: <http://www.mansfieldct.gov/1776/Budget-Information>
- The Superintendent of Region 19 submitted her FY 2021/2022 budget recommendations this past week and these recommendations will be presented during a series of budget workshops beginning on February 23 and continuing into the month of March. The FY 2021/2022 budget of \$22,507,430 represents a 2.29% increase over the FY 2020/2021 budget. Mansfield's allocation of the proposed budget is \$11,265,883, which represents a roughly 2.16% increase over the Town's allocation in the FY 2020/2021 budget. Detailed budget recommendations can be found in their totality here: [https://www.eosmith.org/about/district/board\\_of\\_education/budget\\_information](https://www.eosmith.org/about/district/board_of_education/budget_information)

- ***Eastern Highlands Health District (EHHD):***

- The EHHD conducted four vaccination clinics for phase 1a eligible personnel and those 65+ in the past week, administering 420 doses. Five additional clinics are scheduled for coming week for 2nd dose recipients and those 65 and over.
- Follow this link for more information on the Phases of the vaccine rollout: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccination---Phases>

- Based on health district contact tracing evidence, disease transmission within our population is largely driven by small gatherings of family members not from the same household, small social gatherings, and workplace settings.
- The weekly case count bar chart on the next page indicates a **59% decrease** in the prevalence of cases over the previous five weeks. Follow this link for more town level data: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Data-Tracker>

### TOWN LEVEL DATA

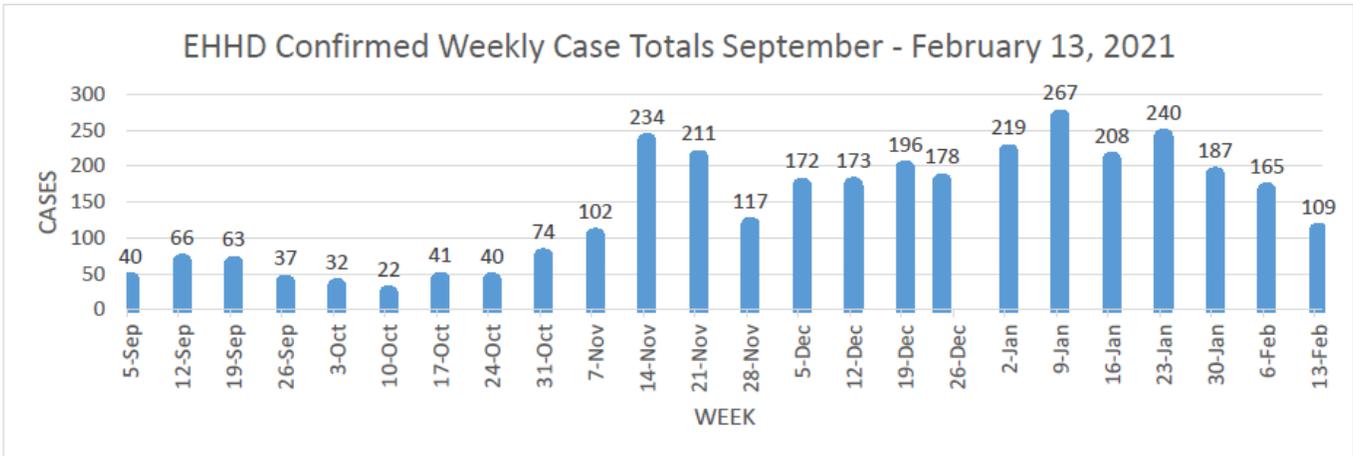
TOWN	Andover	Ashford	Bolton	Chapin	Columbia	Coventry	Mansfield	Scotland ++	Tolland	Willington	EHHD Totals
Cumulative Cases	146	217	222	100	276	580	1162	38	759	222	3,722
Change from last week	5	7	4	3	6	14	47	2	13	8	109
Two week change	13	10	18	8	15	45	99	3	46	17	274
Deaths	3	4	5	0	4	8	16	1	15	3	59

### EHHD residents who received a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine

TOWN	Andover	Ashford	Bolton	Chapin	Columbia	Coventry	Mansfield	Scotland ++	Tolland	Willington
Estimated pop	3,236	4,255	4,884	2,239	5,379	12,407	25,487	1,672	14,618	5,864
Received 1 <sup>st</sup> dose COVID vaccine	341	472	617	213	827	1,405	1,565	152	1,850	508

Source: Connecticut immunization registry/CT DPH as of 2/16/2020; population based on 2010 census

*\*It is important to recall that the Town of Mansfield's population is comprised roughly 55%-60% of UConn students, which has the effect of substantially reducing the overall percentage of Town residents who have received a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine up to this point.*



- **Planning & Development**

- **Emergency Childcare Assistance**

- We are continuing to accept applications for emergency child care assistance from residents who have been financially impacted by the pandemic. Additional information is available at <http://www.mansfieldct.gov/2089/COVID-Assistance>. Residents are encouraged to complete a pre-screening form prior to starting the application to identify potential eligibility concerns. Questions should be sent to [HelpingHand@MansfieldCT.org](mailto:HelpingHand@MansfieldCT.org). The web page also has Frequently Asked Questions about the program. Plans are to distribute basic information to all Mansfield School families this week, and details have been mailed to all registered childcare centers.

- **Downtown Partnership, Economic Development & Marketing:**

- **Mansfield Downtown Partnership**

- Our “Spend & Win: Supersized!” activity continues through the end of the month. This activity encourages residents to support Mansfield restaurants and enter to win fun prizes, a different one each week. For more information, please visit [mansfieldmdp.org/spendwin](http://mansfieldmdp.org/spendwin)
    - We are continuing to support the Mansfield Public Schools Grade 4 remote learners, who are working to raise funds to support local businesses and to show appreciation for essential workers in our community. They will use the money they raise to purchase gift cards from local businesses and then donate the gift cards to essential workers at Windham Hospital. They have raised more than \$3,200 already. Learn more here: <https://gofund.me/a47b9376>
    - We are also continuing our support of all Mansfield businesses by communicating guidance from the state for safe operations, funding and business development opportunities, and federal news and updates through email blasts and our website (please see [mansfieldmdp.org/reopen](http://mansfieldmdp.org/reopen))
    - In light of the anticipated easing of gathering restrictions, we are planning for possible summer events. Staff continues to monitor state health and safety guidelines. Determination of specific events will depend on the allowed attendance and cost of the event, among other factors.

- **Economic Development**

- The Town will be placing an ad in the March edition of *Site Selection* magazine highlighting Mansfield as a great place for business development. The audience for *Site Selection* magazine is real estate decision makers and site selection professionals. The Town ad will supplement a full page ad from the State of Connecticut through its Department of Economic and Community Development and AdvanceCT.
    - The Four Town (Mansfield, Bolton, Coventry, and Tolland) Action Plan for Economic Vitality steering committee continues to meet monthly. At its meeting in February, the group identified

priority action items which include an asset inventory, community calendar, and trails/open space mapping. A marketing campaign is also being developed with the assistance and encouragement of college students.

- **Human Services:**

- Youth service continues on-site services in the schools and virtual clinical and group sessions afterschool. The second semester virtual mentoring program with UConn students has started with four groups. The new School Readiness Grant is being prepared for submittal.
- Social Services continues with its food distribution programs including Mobil FoodShare, The Emergency Food Assistance Program and Food Pantry. Calls for a variety of assistance/referrals (housing, eviction prevention, legal services, family caregiving) continue to increase. Filing period for the Elderly/Totally Disabled Homeowners Tax Credit program started on 2/1/2021. Accepting applications from newly eligible, along with those who have need to make changes (income and/or household size).
- Senior Services continues with virtual and drive through programming with an upcoming meal this Friday that will serve 100 seniors. All of the outreach coordinator and much of the other staff's time has been devoted to assisting seniors responding to calls with questions about the COVID vaccine program including assistance in registering in the VAMS program, finding clinics and assisting with coordinating transportation to vaccine sites.

- **Parks & Recreation:**

- The Mansfield Community Center continues to serve as a host location for CT COVID-19 vaccines (presently in Phase 1b eligible residents 75+ years of age) four days per week (Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday) and will continue to do so until at least early-June. Clinics are provided by the Eastern Highlands Health District several times per week.
- As a reminder, the new temporary Community Center hours are as follows:
  - Monday-Friday: 5:30am-1:30pm and 3:30pm-8:00pm
  - Saturday and Sundays: 7:00am-4:00pm

Staff will continue to closely monitor user patterns and revenue collections, and confer with the Town Manager to identify possible needs for adjustment as appropriate

- **Library:**

- The library continues to respond to high demand for curbside service, computer & browsing appointments, as well as reference, notary & fax services.
- Programs continue to be entirely virtual, and are well-attended.
- A survey has gone out to the public, as the beginning step in developing a strategic plan.
- Library hours are Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday 10 - 3; Tuesday, Thursday 2 – 7. For more details on services the Library continues to offer, please contact us at 860-423-2501 or [MansfieldLibrary@MansfieldCT.org](mailto:MansfieldLibrary@MansfieldCT.org)

- **Town Clerk:**

- The Town Clerk other members of the staff team recently completed certification training on vital records and several computer security training modules. The vital records training was provided by the Connecticut Town Clerk's Association and presented by staff from the Connecticut Department of Public Health. The security trainings are provided by a state-contracted vendor and are designed to enhance election security.

- **Fire Department:**

- Members of the Fire Department drove firetrucks in a parade of 50+ vehicles organized in honor of Mansfield Town Historian Roberta K. Smith on the occasion of her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday on Sunday, February 14. The proclamation from the Town Council was also presented to Ms. Smith, along with other gifts, by the Mansfield Historical Society.
- Below is a brief synopsis of Fire Department responses for the period Feb. 8 - Feb. 21, 2021.

Type		# Mutual Aid Out of Town
ALS	24	1
BLS	22	2
Total Medical	46	3
Structure Fire	2	1
Smoke in Building	1	1
Fire Alarm	6	
CO Detector	1	
Cover Assignment	1	1
Service Call	3	
Vehicle Accident	5	
Total Other	19	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>6</b>

- **Public Works:**
  - Since the last report, the Department removed three trees and pruned one.
  - Since the last report, the Department responded to three storms and three treating events, using approximately \$43,000 in overtime and 638 tons of treated salt.
  - Salt is an issue as our contractor, DRVN, has depleted all supplies and is no longer allowed to use the port in New London. We received approximately 200 tons of salt today.
  - At this time, the Department has used approximately 50% of its \$225,000 salt budget and approximately 75% of its \$100,000 overtime budget for FY 2021. However, because the snow removal budget is its own separate fund, approximately \$100,000 of unexpended funds carried forward to FY 2021 is available to supplement this year's budget as needed.