

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: April 26, 2021
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, Human Resources & Communications:***
 - As was previously discussed with the Council, the Town subsequently submitted two requests for federal earmark funding per a solicitation announced by Congressman Courtney. One of these projects pertained to new sidewalks that would allow pedestrians to safely navigate CT-195 (Storrs Road) from the Four Corners to Towers Road, and the other pertained to intersection improvements at CT-195 and CT-89 (Warrenville Road). Staff from Congressman Courtney's office subsequently followed up with the Town Manager's Office to pose related questions. We are very excited to report that, earlier today, Congressman Courtney's office provided unofficial word that the Town's proposed project relative to new sidewalks along Storrs Road has been selected for inclusion and will advance on to the next stage where the projects selected at the congressional district level are ultimately evaluated nationally as part of the larger Transportation & Infrastructure bill. As a reminder, this is an estimated \$2.8 million project and approximately \$2.24 million would be provided from federal funds with the remaining \$560,000 coming from non-federal sources (i.e., municipal CIP funds or other sources). We were also told that we can anticipate receiving formal notification on the disposition of the other project (intersection improvements) in the very near future.
 - The Town's new incoming Fire Chief, Fred Mitchell, will officially begin his tenure on May 10. Although his official start day is still roughly two weeks away, he has already started actively reaching out to members of the Mansfield Fire Department and other key stakeholders to become more familiar with the operation he will be leading and managing. A schedule is being developed for May 10 to ensure he has an opportunity to meet with as many key stakeholders as possible during his first day on the job. Chief Mitchell will also be formally introduced to the Town Council during its regular business meeting that evening.
 - The Mansfield Human Rights Commission – in partnership with COR Mansfield, the NAACP Windham/Willimantic branch, and the Mansfield Arts Advisory Committee – has indicated its desire to help spearhead the MLK Mural Project. Representatives from these organizations will be meeting virtually with the Executive Director of the RiseUP Group to discuss next steps with the project. Finalizing the site selection phase is a key next step. The goal is to have an official "groundbreaking" on Juneteenth (June 19) and achieve final completion of the mural by early-fall 2021 so that a grand opening ceremony can be organized in concert with Indigenous Peoples' Day 2021.
 - The Human Services, Youth Services and Recycling/Trash Services departments are partnering with Mansfield Public Schools for two pop-up Spring Resource Fairs. With the

challenge of families coming in to the schools to access information and services, the district is coordinating these pop up fairs to take information directly to the community. This spring's fairs are Monday, April 26 at Holinko Estates at 3-4:30 PM and the second one will be held at Sunny Acres Park on May 5 at 2-3:30 PM. In addition to information about all the services available to families such as Helping Hands, food assistance, camperships and upcoming events, the fairs will offer snacks, giveaways and a drawing for free refurbished bicycles and helmets.

- The Town Manager is scheduled to appear on WILI-AM with Wayne Norman on Friday, May 7 at 7:40 AM for an update on happenings in Mansfield.

- **Mansfield Public Schools (MPS) & Region 19:**

- Sealed bids for the new elementary school construction project were opened on April 13. The Town received a total of seven bids (one of which was not submitted via the online bid portal as required). Four of the seven came in under the maximum project budget. The School Building Committee (SBC) subsequently met on two separate occasions to review the bids, hear recommendations from the owner's project manager (Collier's Project Leaders) and the architecture firm that has designed the new school (TSKP Studio), engage in a scope review, and ultimately vote to award the contract to the preferred construction firm (which is also the lowest bidder). Newfield Construction Group, Inc., was the low bidder on the project with a base bid of approximately \$36.4 million (the final construction project cost increases when numerous "add alternate" elements are included, but the total project will still come in comfortably under the maximum construction budget). Newfield has successfully constructed a number of other schools in CT and TSKP Studio has had favorable dealings with them on past projects. It must be noted, however, that the Wohlsen Construction Company, the firm that submitted the second lowest bid on the construction project, has initiated a formal bid protest with the CT Department of Administrative Services (CT-DAS) based on a particular discrepancy in Newfield's submission that Wohlsen believes should change the bid outcome. The SBC has discussed this matter with the Town Attorney who is currently reviewing the petition submitted by Wohlsen and will be formally responding on behalf of the Town to the CT-DAS.
- The Town of Mansfield and Mansfield Public Schools, in concert with the School Building Committee, will be hosting a virtual information presentation on Mansfield's new elementary school on Thursday, April 29 at 6:30. It will be livestreamed at that time, and recorded for viewers to watch at their convenience. The goal is to provide a full update on the project to the community as we transition from design phase to construction.

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

- The EHHD conducted three vaccination clinics this past week, which resulted in 790 doses being administered. To date, the EHHD has hosted 80 clinics administering 9,200 doses. 47% of the EHHD population has received first dose of COVID-19 vaccine as of 4/14. The coverage is 56% when adjusted for the UConn student population.
- UConn Health Mass Vax site on the Storrs Campus is open. The public can schedule appointments for this clinic at <https://mychart.uconn.edu/mychart/Signup>
- In compliance with the FDA the EHHD has paused the administration of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
- Follow this link for more information on the Phases of the vaccine rollout: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Vaccination---Phases>
- The weekly case count on the below chart indicates a reduction of 33% in the total weekly counts from the previous week, which is of course very encouraging. Follow this link for more town level data: <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Data-Tracker>

TOWN LEVEL DATA

TOWN	Andover	Ashford	Bolton	Chaplin	Columbia	Coventry	Mansfield	Non-student	Scotland ++	Tolland	Willington	EHHD Totals
Cumulative Cases	179	237	271	127	336	714	1,472	0	42	933	266	4,577
Change from last week	5	5	4	2	7	19	18	(11)	1	18	4	83
Two week change	9	7	13	8	14	29	74	(21)	3	39	12	208
Deaths	3	4	5	0	5	8	27	(27)	2	19	3	76

CONNECTICUT TOTALS (April 22, 2021)

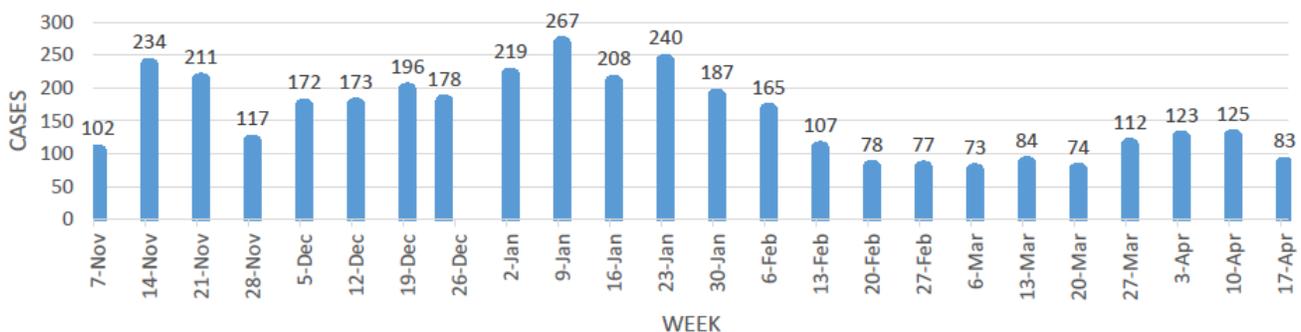
Number of cumulative cases	Change from last week	Change from two weeks	Current hospitalizations	Two week change in hospitalizations	Deaths
333,732	5,732	13,953	515	0	8,039

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

TOWN	Andover	Ashford	Bolton	Chaplin	Columbia	Coventry	Mansfield	Scotland ++	Tolland	Willington	EHHD Totals
Estimated pop	3,236	4,255	4,884	2,239	5,379	12,407	25,487	1,672	14,618	5,864	80,041
Received 1 st dose COVID vaccine	1,741	2,127	2,748	1,046	3,049	6,518	7,231	729	8,415	2,662	36,266

**The Town of Mansfield's population is comprised roughly 55%-60% of UConn students, which will substantially reduce the overall percentage of Town residents who have received a first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.*

EHHD Confirmed Weekly Case Totals November - April 17, 2021



- **Planning & Development**
 - **Helping Hand Program:** With summer approaching, we know that many families are looking to summer camps to provide child care for school age children. The Helping Hand program can assist families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with registration costs for summer camps licensed by the State of Connecticut as a childcare provider as well as those who are exempt from licensing. To determine whether a summer camp is eligible, please visit: 211childcare.org. Families interested in applying for assistance are encouraged to contact the Department of Planning and Development at 860.429.3330 or email HelpingHand@MansfieldCT.org.
 - **Housing Rehabilitation:** If your house is in need of repair, we may be able to help. Mansfield's Housing Rehabilitation Program provides assistance with home repairs and improvements to low and moderate income households. We provide a 0% interest loan of up to \$35,000 with no monthly payments; the loan is repaid upon sale or refinancing. The Town will prepare a scope of work for your project, obtain construction bids, and manage the construction process and contractor payments.

- **Downtown Partnership, Economic Development & Marketing:**
 - Our celebration of National Poetry Month continues in Downtown Storrs. On Thursday, everyone is invited to participate in *Poem in Your Pocket Day*, a fun, free, activity shared by poetry fans across the country. Take a *Poem Stroll* through downtown and enjoy a work by US Poet Laureate Joy Harjo. Start at Little Aladdin and follow the signs to complete the poem. And, be on the lookout for *Sidewalk Stanzas* – some will appear in the rain while others will be visible until the rain washes them away. Learn more about each activity at downtownstorrs.org/poetry.
 - Save the date: The 16th Annual John E. Jackman Tour de Mansfield will take place on Saturday, June 5. Explore Mansfield's scenic roads and historic villages by bicycle! This year's event will have some modifications for health and safety. Please visit mansfieldct.gov/biketour for more information.
 - The Partnership encourages local restaurants to get ready to apply for the Restaurant Revitalization Fund, part of the American Rescue Plan. Information and a sample application can be found at restaurants.sba.gov. The Partnership invites businesses with questions about this program to contact us at mdp@mansfieldct.org or 860.429.2740.
 - We continue to support all Mansfield businesses by communicating guidance from the state for safe operations, funding and business development opportunities, and federal news and updates – including the state's recent announcement of anticipated changes starting May 1 – through email blasts and our website (please see mansfieldmdp.org/reopen).

- **Human Services:**
 - Beginning Monday, May 3rd, the Senior Center will begin a phased-in reopening. They'll start with offering several small, in-person groups, one-to-one services and some fitness classes throughout the week, following all of the state guidelines regarding COVID safety. Reservations and/or pre-registration, as well as masks and social distancing are required, and the Center will look a bit different, but we are very excited to begin welcoming the public back into the building. Throughout the month of May, the Center will also continue offering some popular online programs, to ensure that those cannot attend in person for whatever reason are still able to stay connected. All of the details regarding the Center's reopening and their programming can be found in their newsletter, *Senior Sparks*, which is on their webpage at www.mansfieldct.gov/seniors or available at the Center, and anyone with any questions at all should feel free to give the Center a call at 860-429-0262.

- Because in-person lunches won't resume as of yet, the Senior Center will begin offering their popular drive-through pick-up lunches once a week throughout the month of May. They've got a delicious line-up of homemade meals, including salmon, shepherd's pie and BBQ chicken for Memorial Day. Pre-registration is required for these lunches, and all of the details can, again, be found in *Senior Sparks*.
- The Senior Center has created a technology loan program with two iPads and two Chromebooks available for seniors to borrow to access online resources from home. The Center's volunteer technology guru, Bob, is also now available for one-to-one appointments at the Center for technology assistance. Call the Center for more information or to make an appointment (860-429-0262).
- The Commission on Aging members have updated a local resource guide called *At Your Fingertips*, which can now be found online at www.mansfieldct.gov/atyourfingertips. The guide includes local services, supports, housing, recreation, and more. Thank you to the members who worked to update this valuable reference!
- The Commission on Aging is also looking for two new members. The Commission on Aging studies the needs of older adults in our community, and evaluates and recommends programs to meet those needs. Members also serve as a resource group to Mansfield citizens. For more information on the Commission on Aging, or if you're interested in serving, please visit their webpage or email commissiononaging@mansfieldct.gov.
- CHOICES Medicare counseling is again available through the Center. Certified CHOICES volunteer Bob Bernstein is available by appointment to provide assistance and answer any questions you may have about Medicare. Call the Senior Center to schedule an appointment.
- Finally, this month the Senior Center staff recognized all of their volunteers with surprise drop-off goody bags, thank you gifts and a festive Zoom party, complete with party hats and noisemakers. The Senior Center team expresses their sincere appreciation to all of the volunteers over the years who have helped build the Center to what it is today, and they marked the occasion by planting a white lilac bush at the Center in honor of Mansfield Senior Center Volunteers. We hope that as this beautiful bush blooms each spring, we are reminded of all the wonderful people who have shaped the Mansfield Senior Center by giving their time and energy throughout the years.

- **Parks & Recreation:**

- Parks & Recreation is heavily engaged in managing spring programs and preparations for a diversity of summer camps, programs and other summer services.
- Parks, trails and playgrounds continue to welcome a high volume of users.
- Acting Director O'Keefe and Member Services Coordinator Rontey were guests on the Wayne Norman show this past Thursday. They took the opportunity to share information on summer camps and programs, encouraged people to visit the Community Center, expressed how safe the community center has been with COVID-19 protocols and reminded folks of all the outdoor resources in town too. A link to the interview is: <https://www.mixcloud.com/wili1400/42221-spring-programs-at-the-mansfield-community-center/>
- The Mansfield Community Center has a two-week free trial available now thru June 30, designed to attract new and past members.
- The Mansfield Community Center continues to serve as a host site for CT COVID-19 vaccines. Clinics are provided by Eastern Highlands Health District.

- **Library:**

- We are pleased to announce that the Mansfield Public Library will be expanding its hours as of Monday, May 3, 2021. Library hours will be:
 - Monday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday: 9:30 AM - 3 PM for walk-in service.
 - Tuesday & Thursday: 1:30 PM – 7 PM for walk-in service.

- Curbside pickup will continue to be available during all open hours, as will mobile printing services.
 - The library is busy packaging and providing zinnia and sunflower seeds to the public as part of the Sustainability Committee's Pollinator Pathways program. They are seeing much interest! One section of the library's children's garden will be planted with zinnias and sunflowers as part of this effort.
- **Town Clerk:**
 - The Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerks attended the annual Connecticut Town Clerks Association Spring conference last week. Over the course of the three-day conference, they received critical updates from the State Elections and Enforcement Commission, Department of Public Health, Secretary of the State's Office, and Connecticut Public Library and reviewed select legal duties of Town Clerks as they pertain to these State entities. Some notable changes with larger implications on daily Office operations include the September 2021 launch of the State's new Electronic Death Registry System (EDRS) and a new electronic trade name registry system for statewide use.
- **Facilities:**
 - The Facilities Department continues to work diligently to remediate issues identified by CT-OSHA during the agency's late-2020 unannounced site visit. This includes items such as installing new "EXIT" lights, adding power outlets, and installing a new eye wash station. The Department also recently conducted an OSHA training for staff.
 - As previously reported, the Town recently published a request for qualifications (RFQ) relative to a facilities use and program study to address present/future needs. Submissions are due May 6. The RFQ can be found here: <http://www.mansfieldct.gov/bids.aspx?bidID=136>
 - The Facilities Department recently published a request for proposals (RFP) relative to bids on Middle School roof replacement and roof-mounted solar array. The project officially goes out to bid on April 14 with a submission deadline of May 6. The RFP can be found here: <http://www.mansfieldct.gov/bids.aspx?bidID=138>
- **Police**
 - The number of law enforcement calls for service has decreased substantially in recent weeks as the on-campus student population returned home for the remainder of the spring semester commencing on April 12 (spring break week), but it should be noted that the potential for an uptick in party-related activity remains probable given that a large number of students residing in off-campus housing will complete the remainder of the semester in-Town.
 - A timeline for filling the Mansfield Resident Trooper Supervisor vacancy being created by Sergeant Timme's upcoming retirement is still being worked out by the leadership in Troop C (Tolland barracks). At this time it is expected that the recruitment process will be completed during the month of June and the Town Manager will be taking part in the screening process.
- **Fire Department:**
 - Below is a brief synopsis of Fire Dept. responses for the period April 12 – April 25, 2021.

Type		# Mutual Aid Out of Town
ALS	19	4
BLS	22	1
Total Medical	41	5
Electrical Fire	1	

Structure Fire	2	1
Fire Alarm	2	
Brush Fire	4	
CO Detector Activation	1	1
Smoke Investigation	2	
Outside Fire	2	
Vehicle Fire	1	
Search and Rescue	1	
Service Call	1	
Vehicle Accident	5	
Total Other	22	2

- **Public Works:**

- Since the last report, the Department in-house crew removed 28 trees.
- Public Works will begin the drainage improvements on Mount Hope Road between Wormwood Hill Road and Warrenville Road (Route 89) starting today (April 26) and continue for the next several months. This work will coincide with the drainage improvements that continue on Chaffeeville Road between Mulberry Road and Gurleyville Road. There may be times when the roads in these areas will be closed in order to install drainage structures or install pipe across the road. School bus service, trash service, and local traffic will have access. Please drive with caution during the course of this work. The Public Works Department appreciates everyone's cooperation as they work to improve the Town's roads.
- Annual street sweeping of all Town-owned paved roads continues and this project is just under 50% completed.
- The majority of the Public Works Operations Division worked at the schools this past week to catch up on maintenance during school spring vacation (this slowed progress on street sweeping).
- Gravel road maintenance grading is complete.
- The Department is collecting used fencing and posts at the transfer station for the Solid Waste Advisory Committee in order to create free compost bin kits for residents.