

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: Ryan J. Aylesworth, Town Manager
Date: June 14, 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:*

- Final preparations are being made for the 2021 annual Town Meeting, which is being convened at Mansfield Middle School beginning at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, June 15. Great care is being taken to implement a meeting format that maintains public health precautions while still facilitating the best possible public access to the voting process.
- On June 9, the CT General Assembly approved the FY 2022 – FY 2023 state biennial budget, which preserved the increases in payment-in-lieu of taxes (PILOT) funding included in the budget passed by the joint Appropriations Committee. Under the new tiered PILOT formula, the Town of Mansfield would obtain an additional roughly \$4.8 million in revenue, bringing the annual total up from roughly \$8.2 million to approximately \$13 million. It must be understood, however, that the Town's final allocations are subject to state sales tax revenues coming in as projected. The budget holds towns that would have seen a reduction in Education Cost Sharing (ECS) harmless. All towns will receive at least the same amount of ECS in FY 22 that they received in FY 21. The General Assembly has not yet acted on bonding and revenue packages and budget implementer bills.
- On June 11, the Town Manager participated in a media event hosted by Congressman Courtney with respect to infrastructure projects that have been programmed to receive member-directed funding (earmark funding) in the House Transportation Committee's 5-year infrastructure bill. The proposed project involving the construction of 4,800 linear feet of new sidewalks along CT-195 from the intersection with CT-44 to Tower Loop Road is one of just six projects in Congressman Courtney's district that are still under consideration to be included in this federal legislation..
- After learning that the request for earmark funding to support costs associated with the proposed CT-195/CT-89 intersection improvements project had not been advanced by Congressman Courtney's Office (an entirely separate project from the CT-195 sidewalk construction project noted above), Town staff resubmitted a slightly modified application to U.S. Senator Murphy's Office when a subsequent call for earmark funding requests was issued. This project, which is being done as part of the new elementary school construction project, will improve the intersection in anticipation of increased traffic due to the new school. The total project cost is estimated to be \$1 million, and, if funded by a member-directed request (earmark), 80% of the project costs would be covered by the federal government. This cost share is identical to the 80-20 split associated with the \$2.8 million earmark funded project that received favorable consideration from Congressman Courtney's Office relative to

construction of a new 4,800 linear foot section of 10-foot wide multi-use trail from the Four Corners to the CT-195 intersection with Tower Loop Road.

- This past week the Town Manager, Mansfield Downtown Partnership Executive Director, and Director of Planning & Development took part in a virtual meeting with Mr. David Lehman, Commissioner of the CT Department of Economic and Community Development. The conversation was wide ranging and touched on a gamut of pending/potential economic development efforts in the Town of Mansfield. In addition to his important role with respect to economic development in the state, Commissioner Lehman also sits on the UConn Board of Trustees. Town representatives conveyed to Commissioner Lehman the value of the Governor and UConn Board of Trustees placing a high degree of importance on the next UConn President having a record of accomplishment and commitment to community economic development.
- On June 2, at the invitation of the Mansfield Downtown Partnership's leadership, the Town Manager joined with other invited speakers to give a presentation to the Partnerships' membership and guests at the organization's annual meeting. The Town Manager's presentation focused primarily on recently completed projects of noteworthiness, and a more detailed discussion of the numerous ways in which the Town is making progress in enhancing its stakeholder outreach and communications efforts.
- Earlier this month the Town administration and Human Resources staff participated in an initial meeting with Civil Service Employee Association (CSEA) representation as part of discussing the negotiation process relative to the current union contracts (Public Works employees and professional/technical employees) that are slated to expire June 30. Additional meeting dates and ground rules that will inform these negotiations are presently being finalized.
- On June 7, local officials and other stakeholders gathered by the flagpole in the southern courtyard of the municipal building to read the Town Council's approved proclamation recognizing June as LGBTQIA+ Pride Month, and raised the Progress Pride flag.
- The Town's conversion from its longstanding financial management software (ADMINS) to its new financial management software (MUNIS) is very near completion and the new system will officially go live at the beginning of the new fiscal year (July 1). In anticipation of this upcoming shift, the Finance Department has been working very closely with the vendor to ensure that all Town staff who have either submission or approval responsibilities in the financial management software receive comprehensive training (web-based) in the new program to help ensure the transition is as smooth as possible.
- Plans for the next phase of reopening municipal facilities are presently being developed with an expectation that, should current trends continue, it is likely that all face mask requirements will be lifted during the month of July.
- The June/July issue of the Town's bimonthly e-newsletter was published on June 1: <http://www.mansfieldct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/11398/June-2021-Mansfield-Newsltr-FINAL>
- The Town Manager made his most recent appearance on Wayne Norman's WILI-AM radio program on June 4. A recording of the interview can be found here: <https://www.mixcloud.com/wili1400/6421-mansfield-town-manager-ryan-aylesworth/>

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

- The 2020-21 school year comes to a close on Thursday, June 17. It has been a challenging, yet rewarding year for MPS. MPS began the year with students attending school in person only two days a week but by mid-October began opening our schools for five days of in-person learning. This began with elementary schools first and then the middle school one grade at a time. In addition, students could opt-in to full remote learning. MPS supported 287 students, or almost 29%, as remote learners in September but numbers declined to 109, or 11% by the end of May.

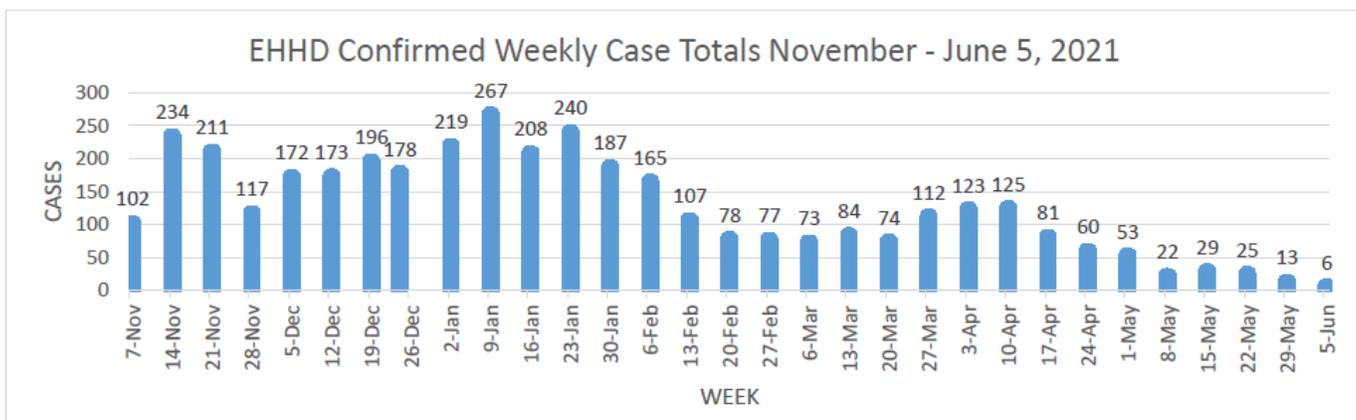
- The School Building Committee is finalizing plans for a groundbreaking ceremony for the new elementary school on June 24 at 3:30 PM. Key state and local dignitaries and other stakeholders are being made aware of the gathering, and members of the public will be invited to attend the ceremony

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

- The EHHD is hosting a series of pop-up and walk-up vaccination clinics. No appointments are necessary. Go to the EHHD website (www.ehhd.org) for times and locations.
- The weekly case count on the below chart indicates downward trend in the past nine 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	Chaplin	Columbia	Coventry	Mansfield	Non-student	Scotland ++	Tolland	Willington	EHHD Totals
Cumulative Cases	182	247	291	132	345	760	1,526		42	962	282	4,769
Change from last week	0	0	3	0	0	1	2	(2)	0	0	0	6
Two week change	0	0	5	0	0	4	7	(6)	0	2	1	19
Deaths	3	4	5	0	6	8	27	(27)	2	19	3	77



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 % of pop.	1,978 61%	2,449 56%	3,121 64%	1,143 51%	3,321 62%	7,489 60%	8,662 34%	820 49%	9,570 65%	3,184 54%	41,737 52%
Fully vaccinated % of pop.	1,769 55%	2,208 52%	2,832 58%	1,035 46%	2,992 56%	6,715 54%	7,772 30%	762 46%	8,515 58%	2,849 49%	37,449 47%

*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.

• **Planning & Development**

- **Affordable Housing Plan:** The Town Council and Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on the Town's proposed affordable housing plan on Wednesday, July 23, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. via GoToMeeting. The Town's consultant will be presenting the draft plan as well as results of the recent strategy survey at this hearing. Residents are encouraged to provide input on the Plan either through submitting written comments to PlanZoneDept@MansfieldCT.org or by participating in the public hearing. The draft plan is available for review at www.MansfieldCT.org/AffordableHousingPlan.
- **Planning & Zoning Commission/Inland Wetlands Agency:** There are presently a number of "higher profile" proposed new development projects at various stages of review by the Planning & Zoning Commission and/or the Inland Wetlands Agency within the Town of Mansfield. To help stakeholders and the general public access related information of interest, a "Story Map" of development activity is now available at www.MansfieldCT.gov/DevelopmentActivity. Pending applications with upcoming public hearings include:
 - The Villas at Four Corners-proposed 358-unit multi-family development on Middle Turnpike between CVS and Key Bank;
 - Haven at Storrs-proposed redevelopment of the Holiday Mall, former Two-Steps and former Willard's Hardware sites in the Four Corners with 399 apartments and approximately 15,000 square feet of commercial space. In addition to the special permit application for this project, there is also an associated zoning map amendment to revise the boundary between the Flood Hazard Zone and Planned Business-3 Zone to reflect flood hazard area mapping recently approved by FEMA;
 - Glisten Diamonds-proposed research laboratory in the first floor of the former Echo Grange Building in Mansfield Center;
 - Amendments to the Zoning Regulations, including:
 - Temporary and Limited Moratorium on Cannabis Establishments
 - Proposed maximum building height of 4 stories for townhouses in certain zones
 - Establishment of standards for drive-through facilities and request to allow drive-through facilities associated with restaurants in the Planned Business 1 zone with special permit approval.
- **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, families are encouraged to 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, the Planning Department 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. Residents can learn more by calling 860.429.3330.

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

- The Partnership hosted its first in-person event in over a year on Saturday, June 5. The 16th Annual John E. Jackman Tour de Mansfield drew 60 participants of all ages for a beautiful, sunny day full of cycling and community. Together with the Community Center, the Partnership was happy to be able to host this event in a more traditional format (albeit with adjustments for health and safety) this year. Cyclists enjoyed a 20-mile or 38-mile route along Mansfield's scenic roads. Rather than the traditional communal lunch, for this year, participants received a boxed lunch to-go from Gansett Wraps.
- Plans are in the works for more in-person events this summer! [Moonlight Movies](#) will return to Betsy Paterson Square this coming August, with games, crafts, and more. Join us for *Raya and the Last Dragon* on August 6 and *Frozen 2* on August 13!
- And, mark your calendars: The 18th Annual Celebrate Mansfield Festival will return to Downtown Storrs on Saturday, October 2! Planning is underway for Mansfield's largest community event. Please visit downtownstorrsfestival.org or follow @DowntownStorrs on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for news and announcements as planning progresses.
- The Partnership continues to support our Mansfield businesses as they navigate the pandemic and look to return to more normal operations. Business owners can receive email updates or find information on our website, mansfieldmdp.org/reopen. To be added to our email list, please simply email mdp@mansfieldct.org with your name, business name, and location.

- ***Human Services:***

- *Youth Services*

- Youth Service Bureau (YSB) and Parks and Rec were successful in applying for \$25,000 of grant funds from the Accelerate CT Summer Expansion program to defray camp costs for youth who qualify for Free & Reduced Lunch to attend Camp Mansfield. These funds are being used to offer week-long camp scholarships for qualifying youth.
- Mansfield's School Readiness Grant application was approved by the CT Office of Early Childhood and includes a new School Readiness site for the 2021-2022 grant year at Hope Montessori School.
- Almost all 500 miniature Progress Pride flags have been picked up by community members from Town Hall, Mansfield Senior Center, and Mansfield Public Library.
- YSB will be holding a make-your-own-pizza-kit Summer Kick-Off distribution on June 18, 2021 at the Mansfield Senior Center. We anticipate giving away 125 kits to Mansfield youth and families.
- YSB has launched registration for its upcoming summer programs for youth which include several outdoor offerings as well as virtual crafting activities for Mansfield youth and families.

- *Social Services*

- Mobile Foodshare continues to see a steady number of participants- approximately 160 at each of its distributions hosted every other Thursday at 11:30 AM to 12 noon.

- There has been a decrease in TEFAP recipients, in large part due to the saturation of food/food access, therefore, the program was cancelled for June.
- Shelby Fuerst came onboard mid-May as the project coordinator for the Mansfield Farms to Families Program.
- Fifteen Mansfield households have been awarded subsidized CSA shares in participating local farms. This new initiative is the opportunity for ALICE households to gain access to locally grown fresh produce.
- Plans are underway for food boxes of fresh, locally grown products to be distributed through the Mansfield Farm to Families Program. The first distribution is slated for July 12th. The program could sponsor 100 households for this event.

Senior Services

- The Senior Center is fully reopened and hosting a number of fun in-person classes, activities and events each week. Seniors celebrated being back together with a fantastic Welcome Back Concert with Bruce John on June 2; and we transformed our van into an ice cream truck for after the show! Later this month we'll host a Paint Night, a Classic Movie Night and a fascinating presentation on myths, mysteries and spying in the USSR-Russia with Henry Quinlan.
- While in-person lunches are still on hold, we continue to provide our delicious weekly drive-through lunches. This month we'll celebrate Father's Day with BBQ Ribs and chocolate cream pie on the 18th, and we have an awesome line-up of menus for July! We also continue to offer weekly grab-n-go meals and meals-on-wheels to any qualifying Senior through our collaboration with TVCCA.
- We're providing in-person wellness services again, including massage and foot-care, and we've reintroduced our bi-monthly shopping and Foodshare transportation. We're also offering in-person technology assistance and CHOICES Counseling twice per month by appointment.
- The garden at the Senior Center continues to be an attraction to everyone. Jessica Duers spearheads this wonderful space, with fellow gardening enthusiasts.
- Finally, we're very happy to be welcoming back our volunteers and we're always looking to add to our team! If anyone is interested in volunteering to drive for meals-on-wheels or medical appointments, helping out at our Reception Desk, working in the kitchen or running a group, please call the Senior Center for more information!

• **Parks & Recreation:**

- Southeast Park Field C (the ball field located furthest north of Southeast Elementary School, bordering the Mansfield Hollow State Park property line) is now closed until the completion of the new elementary school project period. A construction/safety fence has been installed along the access road and connecting staging area on field C. Access to MHSP trail heads will be available to hikers and bikers but parking will only be permitted along the route 89 side of the park. Directional signage to the trails has been placed in the area. This information has been distributed to the press and to the public.
- Summer camps and summer program registrations have been positive. While registrations are considerably smaller than non-COVID years, registrations are increasing daily. We are pleased to announce that a diversity or in-person programs, including Camp Mansfield, will be held this year after low enrollment forced cancelation of the camp and most in-person programs last summer.
- Parks and Recreation, with the support of Youth Services, was awarded \$25,000 from the Connecticut Department of Education Summer Enrichment Expansion Grant program. Funds will be used to provide limited FREE sessions at Camp Mansfield full day camp to qualifying families. Mansfield families are eligible if they are participating in the free/reduced school lunch program. In addition to the assistance from Youth Services, Parks and Recreation would

like to thank the Board of Education for their support, especially Stephanie Deason, who is assisting Parks and Recreation with communication to families and verification letters.

- The Mansfield Community Center will conclude their role as a host site for CT COVID-19 vaccines with Eastern Highlands Health District this week. Parks and Recreation was pleased to provide nearly 70 days of room use and staff support since late December in assisting EHHD with vaccinations to the public.

- **Library:**

- *Mansfield Adult Summer Reading Challenge 2021*

- This is a new program being offered June 20 – August 14
 - To participate, adults can read a book that fulfills a challenge from our list and submit your completed challenge using our form online or at the library. There are 10 different reading challenges and there will be a prize drawing every two weeks, with prizes donated by generous local organizations.

- Children's Summer Reading

- Program officially kicks off on Saturday, June 19 @ 11:00 AM and will feature professional magician Ed Popielarczyk
 - We hope residents will help launch the public library's 2021 Summer Reading Program with this fun and interactive magic show. Mr. Popielarczyk is a professional magician, balloon sculptor and storyteller who has been entertaining kids and families for over 30 years. His show is full of humor and great tricks and is fun for the whole family.

- **Town Clerk:**

- June is dog licensing month. Please take advantage of the Town's contactless way to license your dog, if possible. See our [dog license webpage](#) for more information on contactless licensing. The State considers any dog license issued after June to be late and charges a \$1/month late fee. Late licensers can also receive a \$75 State ticket issued by the Animal Control Officer. The law requires license tags be worn on the dog's collar and dogs found wearing their updated license tag are easily able to be reunited with their families.

- **Facilities:**

- The Facilities Department is continuing with preparations for summer shutdowns and cleanings of schools and other buildings.
 - The Department has finished mitigating OSHA related citations and is waiting on confirmation from OSHA that all previously identified violations have been resolved to its satisfaction.
 - Meetings are being held with the roofing contractor responsible for carrying out the Middle School roof replacement. Final plans for the work is being developed. The Town will be hiring a Clerk of the Works to oversee the roofing project.
 - The Facilities Department is coordinating the installation of a job site camera for the new elementary school construction project.
 - Town officials are continuing to evaluate the responses received from professional design and engineering firms regarding the request for qualifications (RFQ) the Town recently published relative to a municipal facilities needs assessment and program use study.

- **Police**

- A timeline for filling the Mansfield Resident Trooper Supervisor vacancy being created by Sergeant Timme's upcoming retirement is slowly starting to take shape based on recent communication with the leadership in Troop C (Tolland barracks). The position was recently advertised for approximately two weeks and plans are being made to schedule in-person interviews with candidates during the week of June 21. 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 May 24 – June 13, 2021.

Type	# Calls	# Mutual Aid Out of Town
ALS	36	
BLS	32	4
Total Medical	68	4
Brush, Grass, Forest Fires		
CO Detector Activation		
Fire Alarm	11	
HAZ Mat Gas Leak		
Other Fires		
Other Fires	1	
Service Call		
Smoke/Odor Investigation	2	1
Structure Fire		
Tree on Wires	3	
Vehicle Accident	9	1
Total Fire Calls	26	2
Grand Total	94	6

- **Public Works:**

- Since the last report, we had seven street signs stolen.
 - Since the last report, the Department in-house crew removed 19 trees and pruned one. We are removing dead and diseased trees daily. The crew also spent 13 hours picking up wood logs off roadsides.
 - The Department continues to work on drainage improvements on Mount Hope Road between Wormwood Hill Road and Warrentonville Road (Route 89) and on Chaffeeville Road between Mulberry Road and Gurleyville Road. There may be times when we will close these roads. School bus service, trash service, and local traffic will have access.
 - Annual street sweeping of all Town owned paved roads is approximately 92% complete, we will resume once after completing other projects.
 - Roadside mowing will continue throughout the month of June.
 - 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.
 - CT DOT is paving on CT-195 from CT-275 to CT-44.
 - CT DOT complete milling on Route 44 (Four Corners to the Coventry line). The plan is to pave in August.