

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: John C. Carrington, Interim Town Manager
Date: August 24, 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:***

- **UConn COVID-19/Fall plan:**

- Best place to get correct information is the data dashboard, updated daily between 4 and 5 pm. reopen.uconn.edu/covid-dashboard
 - Current gathering size limits are what is enforced, not proposed those proposed by Mansfield and Windham
 - COVID hotline 860-486-COVI (2684)
 - Have COVID questions, please email covidquestions@uconn.edu
 - Most of the new cases were a result of students that were put into isolation due to contact with a positive student, then became positive. These weren't random positives.
 - An open letter to the Town of Mansfield was sent out by the UConn President, Tom Katsouleas and Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Carl Lejuez, on the Thought Exchange.
 - Testing will continue throughout the semester for surveillance. Groups tested will be chosen based on the recommendations of SHaW (Student Health and Wellness) and through the wastewater data. As of now, UConn has no updates on wastewater testing but it'll ramp up as they move into more day to day operations.
 - UConn police do not oversee the Town's neighborhoods and roads. Some social posts about UConn police are wrong. Residents don't seem to understand 1) what the relationship is and 2) what actual police officers by law are allowed to do.

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

- Plans continue to reopen schools on a hybrid model beginning September 3, 2020. Parents have been offered the opportunity to opt in to 5 days of remote learning. Teachers have already been in schools preparing for the opening. Use of the hybrid model will be re-assessed after one month to determine whether schools could safely open five days a week for all students

- ***Downtown Partnership:***
 - Continuing “Mask Up, Mansfield!” public awareness campaign to encourage all residents and visitors to wear a mask, maintain a distance of six feet from others, and wash hands frequently; campaign includes signs, decals, and social media posts, including a Facebook ad campaign which has reached over 5,500 individuals and has over 46,000 impressions to date
 - 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 through email blasts and our website (please see mansfieldmdp.org/reopen)
 - Preparing for the 2020 Celebrate Mansfield Festival which will be a month-long celebration all over town with safe and socially distanced activities to promote the people, organizations, and businesses that make Mansfield special; the Festival kicks off on September 1 – visit downtownstorrsvillage.org for more information.

- ***Fire and Emergency Services***

The Department of Fire and Emergency Services received a \$1500 grant award from CT Water. The grant program is for Fire Departments to support water supplies and related equipment. Funds from the grant will be used to purchase gated relief valves for two of our fire trucks. The valves provide protection to the fire trucks pump from damage due to sudden surges in the water flow

- ***Human Resources***
 - Interviews scheduled for Thursday August 27th for candidates for the Assessor position
 - Coordinating the Department Head interviews for the Town Manager finalists
 - Planning for the reopening of Town Hall and employee concerns regarding balancing work/school challenges.

- ***Parks & Recreation***
 - The fall program brochure has been distributed. Fall programs include a combination of traditional and virtual programs. Staff will be adapting as needed to meet state and local health rules and interests of community.
 - The Community Center be accepting non-members for facility usage beginning August 31 by reservation only.
 - The Town’s newest open space preserve, “Simpson-Wood Preserve”, is now available for public use of the trails. Trails are clearly marked and a downloadable version will soon be available through the Parks and Recreation website. A convenient parking area is available at the trail head and is located on Route 89 (Warrenville Road) across the street from Mt. Hope Park.

- ***Planning and Development***
 - **Mansfield Farms to Families Program Grant**
The CT Department of Agriculture awarded the Human Services Department and Taste of Mansfield \$24,999 to pilot the Mansfield Farm to Families Program to increase access to low income households to local food by developing connections with local farms. The pilot program will include Food Boxes and Community Supported Agriculture shares. Fundraising tools will be developed to sustain the program over the long term.
 - **Small Cities Community Development Block Grant-COVID 19**
Following the Council’s August 10, 2020 public hearing, the Department of Planning and Development submitted a grant application for \$500,000 in CDBG-CV funds to assist low and moderate income residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic with childcare, rent and

food. A copy of the application including a more detailed project description is included in the Communications portion of the packet.

- **Upcoming Public Hearing on Amendments to the Zoning Regulations**

The Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 on proposed changes to the Zoning Regulations related to multi-family residential and group dwelling uses; density bonuses for affordable housing; and changes to various zoning districts associated with multi-family and small-lot single-family housing. A copy of the proposed changes is included in the Communications portion of the packet.

- **Public Works:**

- Since the last Town Managers Report, the Public Works Department has been addressing the significant storm damage from Tropical Storm Isaias. The Department has removed 6 additional trees and taken 115 loads of brush to the Transfer Station.
- Paving has begun on Mansfield Avenue and Mansfield City Road and is scheduled for completion this week.
- The Department received notification that it is a finalist for the 2020 LOTCIP solicitation for reconstruction of Maple Road and the Downtown Pedestrian Loop has advanced with CTDOT for Project Initiation.
- Resurfacing of Hillyndale Road from Separatist to Thompson Road is taking place this week, with paving scheduled for next week.

- **Town Clerk**

- **November 3, 2020 Election Update:**

- Preparations for the November 3rd Election are well underway. The Town Clerk's absentee ballot program webpage is updated regularly (a link to this page is available on the Town's homepage). Information regarding how to apply and vote by absentee has been pushed out via Facebook and the Town's email distribution system. A mail piece with important Mansfield-specific absentee voting information is in the works.
- The Secretary of the State's Office will be mailing applications to all registered voters but will not be using a mail house to distribute ballots as they did with the August Primary. All ballots will be issued locally by the Town Clerks. Additional staffing from the Registrar's Office has been arranged to assist the Town Clerk's Office with processing the thousands of absentee applications and ballots expected in the months of September and October

- **August 11, 2020 Presidential Preference Primary Stats:**

- Ballots issued: 1910; ballots returned by 8/11/2020: 1432; ballots rejected for late return: 139

Upcoming Events

- *Covid-19 Testing Event* - Generations Family Health Center, Inc. will be offering free Covid-19 testing at a pop-up site outside the Mansfield Senior Center on September 8, 2020 from 9:00am until 12:00pm. More information will be shared as it becomes available.
- *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.