


MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 
DATE: December 9, 2021
SUBJECT: Town Manager's Report

The following information includes follow up from general items that were discussed at previous Council meetings as well as updates of a general nature from the departments. The items are organized by department and are intended to provide information on activities currently being undertaken by the Town's departments and those matters that are upcoming. Not all departments will be represented in each Report.

Library

- Painting of the ceiling and upper walls at the Library was completed last week with minimal shut down and disruption. The work was performed in a timely fashion and improved the light level and appearance of the main library area greatly.
- The most recent report to the Library Advisory Board is included in this Report.

Parks and Recreation

- In accordance with practice, the Park Maintenance Staff have transitioned to the Public Works Department for the winter to assist with snow plowing and snow removal as well as other winter activities.
- The Connecticut Department of Transportation has joined the Town and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in the project to complete the Air Line Trail connection on the west side of Town. DOT involvement is expected to open up more funding opportunities and a stronger relationship with the Army Corps of Engineers, who has oversight on the project. Staff and the State representatives are scheduled to meet in the upcoming weeks to work on the project plan.
- The Needs Analysis survey is ongoing and has received over 130 responses to date. Staff will continue to promote completion of the survey via social media and the Rivereast.
- The Conservation Lake Commission sponsored a presentation by the Town's lake scientist, Northeast Aquatic Research (NEAR) and the low impact development engineer, Steve Trinkaus, that was directed at the various lake association members. The presentation was given on December 8 and focused on lake nutrient loads and steps property owners can take to help reduce nutrient loading in Lake Pocotopaug. The presentation was similar to the one given to the Town Council at a recent meeting. The recent presentation is available for viewing by interested persons on the Conservation Lake Commission portion of the Town's website.

- Staff and the Town's consultants met last week to identify projects to propose for the next round of grant funding to support watershed improvements. Locations for potential projects include Wells Road, West Point Road, Old Clark Hill, Lakewood Drive, and the Lake Vista detention pond. The group also identified several projects that will be proposed for funding with the ongoing Water Quality Infrastructure monies in the Town's Capital Improvement Fund. Projects are being considered in the Brookhaven area to address water in the area between Mohican Trail and Browning Drive, on Hawthorne Road and Clark Hill Road and in or along Hales Brook.
- Work on the project to replace the Boat Launch at Sears Park is expected to begin in the next several days and will complete by around the end of December. The date has moved around somewhat due to constantly shifting supply timeframes and a final determination on the time needed to fabricate the concrete panels being used for the launch ramp.

Police

- The Department recently participated in the Connecticut Cancer Foundation's *No Shave November* challenge to raise money for cancer awareness. Law Enforcement Officers in Connecticut put down their razors to raise money for cancer and the Department was able to raise \$2,600 in Officer donations and sponsorships.
- The Department continues to conduct background investigations on potential applicants to fill the vacancy that will be created by Sgt. Timothy Dowty's retirement on December 18. The Department hopes to have a recommendation to the Town Manager by the end of December. The next police academy class is scheduled to start on January 21, 2022.
- The Department started the installation of the new in-car camera systems in police vehicles on December 9, 2021. A representative from Axon International came to the Department to show our installer how to complete the process as well as train three members of the Department on the operation of the camera systems. The goal is to have all the cameras installed by the end of December to comply with the grant received by the Town to fund a portion of the cost to purchase and implement body and in-car cameras.
- On Saturday, December 11, the Department will be conducting its annual *Stuff a Cruiser* toy drive event at the Lutheran Church at the intersection of Route 66 and N. Main St. The event will be held between 9:00 am-2:00 pm.
- The Department did not use NARCAN during the month of November.

Public Works

- The Department has been preparing for winter road maintenance operations including calibrating truck salt spreading systems, checking all truck systems for proper function and reliability, placing salt barrels at select locations around town, and cleaning up roadside wood debris from Town tree work. The first snow event occurred on Thursday, December 9 and although it was a small event Department staff responded to ensure that any icing issues were kept in check.
- The Town's catch basin cleaning contractor was scheduled to begin cleaning catch basins in the Lake Pocotopaug watershed this past week. However, the contractor was delayed and is now scheduled to begin within the next week. As a reminder, catch basins in the watershed are cleaned at least twice per year in an effort to minimize the amount of debris from the road drainage system that makes it to the lake.
- As weather permits during the winter months, the Department plans to undertake several small roadside drainage projects. The first is to repair a washout on White Birch road which is expected to begin this week. Crews will also be restoring roadside swales on Hurd Park and on some gravel roads.

Senior Center

- Senior Center attendance for the month of November 2021 was 114 people.
- The Senior Center celebrated the first of three Micro Holiday Parties at Po's Rice and Spice earlier this week. Each party has 30 people signed up and the first was a huge success! Po was so happy to see people she has not seen in a long time. Those in attendance expressed great pleasure in being able to meet up and visit with one another in person in a social environment. The next events will occur this weekend and later in the month.
- Staff was notified earlier this month that the Town had received a grant award for funds to replace the bus used by the Senior Center for transportation services. As the Council may recall, the grant is intended to cover 100% of the cost of the replacement vehicle up to about \$75,000. Staff will be working through the next steps in the grant process including finalizing the grant agreement and ordering the vehicle, which will not likely be available for several months.
- The Food Bank provided 170 food baskets at Thanksgiving for local older adults and the East Hampton Lions Club delivered 50 hot meals to older adults in our community on Thanksgiving Day.

- The Senior Center staff continue to accept applications for energy assistance. As the weather gets colder, people are reminded to apply for the assistance. Center staff continues to monitor the status of applications and advocate for those whose applications were not processed. In some cases, they were more than 30-days delayed and the people were running out of fuel. All cases were resolved within a few days.

WPCA

- Work to repair the force main on the Air Line Trail east of the Cranberry Bog is nearing completion. The contractor has lined the damaged section, has pressure tested it and is ready to put it into service. Monday, during the overnight hours, the contractor will be reattaching the newly repaired section to the existing force main and returning it to service. The work is expected to take most of the night but is being performed overnight to reduce the amount of wastewater flow that will need to be trucked from Colchester to the wastewater treatment plant so the force main can be shut off. We are not anticipating noise concerns, but area residents will see lights and activity in the area.

Youth and Family Services

- Social Services currently has one non-energy Eversource case, 48 energy assistance cases, two multi-service intakes and one Operation Fuel case. The Department is currently also working on its annual "Adopt-a-Family program in addition to managing all calls coming in from community members who wish to make donations during the holiday.
- Epoch Arts is hoping to hang phase two art of the Department's mental health and wellness youth art project in the upcoming weeks. The Department and Epoch Arts are also working on a way to identify all artists with some type of plaque that Social Services will display.
- The Department is currently serving 22 counseling cases and is assisting the schools by providing services at both the middle school and high school to nine youth. This partnership has been a help to families whose children need additional emotional support services but who have transportation issues. The Department continues to work with East Hampton Schools on ways to reach more students.
- Meeting youth in school has also given the Department an opportunity to identify families who might not otherwise call for services. One family identified through in-school counseling as having food insecurity has been set up with weekly food deliveries.

- The staff working with the East Hampton Prevention Partnership are preparing to host the Partnership's Red Watch Program, a safety program aimed at teaching high school juniors and seniors how to recognize the signs of alcohol poisoning.

Town Manager/Other

- The Town's COVID rate jumped further in the recent figures and the Town remains in the "Red Alert" level under the State's framework along with most of the State. In the recent reporting, the Town saw an average of about 3.6 new cases each day or 27.9 cases per 100,000 population. All who are eligible are being encouraged to receive the COVID vaccine, which is available through Chatham Health District and other locations. About 68% of the Town's residents are fully vaccinated.
- Due to staffing changes and vacancies, East Hampton Academy program is on hold. It is possible that the program will be resurrected once vacancies are filled and staff is settled
- Staff is reviewing information from the State Attorney General and Connecticut Conference of Municipalities related to the recent settlement in the lawsuit against the main opioid manufacturers and distributors. The settlement provides payment over several years of funds to municipalities and State for responding to opioid addiction and for prevention activities. The settlement requires registration of the Town in order for us to receive funding and, by registering, additional funds are directed to the State as well. It is possible that the matter will be added to the Town Council's agenda for December to ensure that the January registration deadline is met.

DC

cc: Management Staff

November 2021 Monthly Report

At a glance:

This section contains a brief summary of the most important information.

- The library welcomed Christine Cachuela as our new Children's Librarian. Christine has recently worked at the Windsor Public Library and the Waterford Public Library.
- Ellen Paul's last day was November 30th. The three full time staff members will share the responsibilities of the director in the interim. The library director position was posted to the town's website and on a variety of other job pages on Tuesday, November 23rd. The Library is actively seeking applications for this position.
- The Preston Public Library will be joining Libraries Online (LION) consortium to Library Connection, INC (LCI) in late 2021.
- Painting of the adult reading room rotunda started on November 29th. The adult and young adult collections were closed to the public on Monday, November 29th and Tuesday, November 30th. It is anticipated that the library's should be fully accessible on December 6th.

Strategic Plan Actions Update

This section contains information about new programs, services, collections or initiatives directly relating to the Strategic Plan.

- The Library started painting the rotunda ceiling and upper walls. Painting began on Monday, November 29th. The ceiling will be a bright white, the trim will be blue, and the upper walls will be beige. The painting is anticipated to be complete by Friday, December 3rd. (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)
- Our Wi-Fi has been upgraded and paid for by an ARPA grant to be faster and more reliable, as well as be more easily accessible from outside the building. (*Accessible & Inclusive*)

Department Reports

Administration:

This section contains general updates and news about library administration.

- The Library is actively seeking applications for the director position.
- The Library welcomed new children's librarian Christine Cachuela on November 22nd.
- Space planner Deanna Dewey submitted her final plans to the director before her last day.

Children's Department:

This section contains general updates and news about the Children's Department.

- Outdoor story times continued for the first 3 weeks due to popular demand and good weather.
- New backpacks were purchased to add to the collection for school aged children. The early literacy backpacks have been a popular circulating item for the children's room and patrons have inquired about backpacks for older children. Staff will begin working on getting the items inventoried and processed into the catalog for checkout.
- Staff started a refresh of the children's fiction book collection. Books that have not circulated in three or more years or are in bad condition are being assessed for removal and replacement.

Adult / Young Adult Department:

This section contains general updates and news about the Adult / Young Adult Department.

- Stephanie has accepted the position of co-chair for the High School Nutmeg Book Award for 2024.
- The library welcomed author Deborah Copaken to the library via Zoom for the fall author event series to discuss her latest book *Ladyparts*.
- Teen Destress was renamed and rebranded as Teen Friday. Teens are invited to come to the library to hang out with staff, play board games, video games, and craft. Due to the first Teen Friday on November 5th being popular a second was scheduled on November 19th. The first had 9 teen participants and the second had 8. Staff will continue to offer this program every other week as the staff schedule allows it.
- The large print collection was refreshed before being moved with the nonfiction adult collection. A spot was also created for New large print books, large print books published within the last 12 months to date are now located in the rotunda book shelving along with new nonfiction.

Circulation and Technical Services Department:

This section contains general updates and news about the Circulation and Technical Services Department.

- Cake pans have made their debut on the floor in the cooking section of adult nonfiction. They will be advertised on social media featuring the donor in the coming weeks.
- Shifting of adult nonfiction has been completed to free up space for new furniture.
- Faster and stronger Wi-Fi has been turned on for the building.
- The number of curbside pickups has greatly increased the second half of the month. The first half of the month there was only 1 curbside pickup request and the second half of the month there were over 20 requests.

Strategic Plan Indicators of Success

Circulation

Borrowers *(Accessible and Inclusive)*

	+/- Last Month	November Borrowers	October Borrowers	September Borrowers
Adults (borrowing physical items)	-44	1,015	1,059	1,114
Children (borrowing physical items)	-13	215	228	232
Corporate (borrowing physical items)	-1	13	14	10
Staff (borrowing physical items)	+2	18	16	17
TOTAL		1,261	1,317	1,373
Digital Borrowers		*	380	404

*Waiting for access to numbers, will have update for next meeting

Borrowing *(Welcoming and Vibrant, Informative and Collaborative)*

	2021			2020	2019	2018
	November	October	September	November	November	November
Adult Collection	2,883	3,170	3,533	4,024	4,084	3,386
Children's Collection	2,882	3,238	3,564	3,084	3,114	2,061
Young Adult	261	275	312	133	172	118
SUBTOTAL	6,026	6,683	7,409	7,241	7,370	5,566
eBooks – RB Digital	0*	0*	0*	58	200	239
eBooks – Overdrive		989	1056	697	473	350
eBooks - Hoopla	592	470	520	592	313	n/a
SUBTOTAL		1,459	1,576	1,347	986	589
TOTAL		8124	8,985	8,588	8,356	6,155

*RB Digital has been discontinued.

Visits

Door Counter (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
5,109	4,388	3,476	3,684	3,159							

Programs and Partners

Events, Workshops, Programs and Outreach (*Accessible and Inclusive*)

	<i>Programs</i>			<i>Attendance</i>		
	<i>November</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>September</i>	<i>November</i>	<i>October</i>	<i>September</i>
Adult Events	3	5	6	47	78	78
Children's Events	8	17	8	197	496	142
Young Adult Events	7	10	4	46	90	28
Intergenerational	1	1	1	19	1,268	60
TOTAL	19	33	19	309	1,932	308

Promotion

Website (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

	+/- last month	November	October	September
Users	-223	1,444	1,667	1,660
New Users	-191	1,232	1,423	1,420
Sessions	-302	2,525	2,827	3,058
Page Views	-958	8,134	9,092	10,192

5 Most Popular Pages: Hours and Contact Info, Library Staff, Events Calendar, Mobile Printing, Resources by Subject

Facebook (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

	+/- last month	November	October	September
Likes	+11	2,002	1,991	1,979
Post Reach	-1,110	5,259	6,369	2,601
Post Engagement	-273	1,099	1,372	976

Donations and Fundraising

Donations

Organization	Donation	Restrictions
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