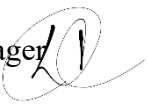


MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 
DATE: February 9, 2024
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 or agencies. 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

- The Library welcomed its new Children's Librarian, Dylan Waddington, on February 5. Dylan comes to the Town with significant early childhood education experience and most recently worked at the Willimantic Public Library.
- As the Library continues the process to update its Strategic Plan, the Strategic Planning Team will be hosting several Community Conversation sessions at the Library throughout the month of March in an effort to garner information from residents about what they would like to see from the Library in coming years. The Library also hopes to conduct a community survey in March, pending Town Council approval. This strategic planning effort is being undertaken with the assistance of the Connecticut Library Consortium, which is assisting several libraries with this work through a joint facilitator.
- The Library has created a new and improved teen space by moving existing shelving and rearranging some of its collections. New furniture for the area is expected to arrive next week and will provide an even more inviting space for teens to be together and participate in activities in the Library.
- The Library's January Monthly Report is included in this Report.

Police

- The Department took delivery of the Town's new K9 Officer, Heros, on February 7. Heros was imported from Slovakia and was born on March 1, 2023. He and his handler, Officer Steven Wawruck, have started their 12-week certification course with the Connecticut State Police K9 Academy. The K9 duo will graduate sometime in May.

- The Department thanks the Rotary Club for leading the fundraising efforts for the new K9 and all the generous donations that were received from residents and businesses in the community that funded the costs to acquire and train the new K9 Officer.

Public Works

- With the somewhat drier weather, Public Works crews have been working to restore gravel roads to better condition. As a result of the heavy rain fall and snow melt back in January and the following very wet weather, it has been difficult to perform the grading and related work until recently. The majority of the heavily traveled gravel roads have been restored to a good condition. The work on gravel roads will continue as weather allows until they are complete. Crews have also been restocking de-icing materials, removing wood from the Rights of Way as well as cleaning and restoring roadside drainage swales.
- On February 2, staff and the Town's engineering consultant B&L submitted the required 14-day self-verification notice to the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the replacement of the Wopowog Culvert. This notice informs the Corps that the Town intends to repair this damage as an emergency and that we are meeting all the requirements of a design that would normally be required. On February 16, we will know if we are able to fast track the project and complete the work without submitting full project details to the Army Corp for review, which would significantly lengthen the time frame of the project. Staff and the engineer are drafting the necessary drawings and specifications for the project in anticipation of being able to solicit contractor pricing shortly after the February 16 timeframe. The Town has already secured the main components of the project and will take possession of those parts as soon as the project is able to proceed. If the project is able to proceed within a reasonable time frame, the road will remain closed until the project is complete. If the time to start of construction is too long, Town crews will implement some sort of temporary repair that will allow residential traffic to cross. The intended project will remove the old culverts and related structures and replace the crossing with a box culvert system that will increase the space available for water to pass through.

Recreation

- The Recreation Department is conducting interviews to fill the vacant Office Assistant position. The vacant Program Coordinator position posting closes today and interviews for that position will be set up as soon as possible. Staff hopes to have these positions filled before the spring and summer season.
- Planning is ongoing for the annual Seamster Park and Jeff Leith Memorial Golf Tournament scheduled for Thursday, May 16. Registration for the event is open on the

Department website now. The Department is actively seeking new sponsors for this event and early registration is encouraged. Proceeds support capital projects in Town parks, especially Seamster Park, as well as the Jeff Leith Memorial Scholarship, which provides funds to a resident scholar athlete who honors Mr. Leith's legacy through dedication to learning and leadership and intends to further their education with an undergraduate degree, or who plans to enter the military service.

- Staff met with DEEP representatives the week of February 5 to begin the final phases of the 319 Lake and Watershed grant closeout process. Construction reporting on completed projects, grant report tracking, and public education constitute the remaining projects to be completed.
- Winter programming will begin to wrap up soon, and the spring and summer planning process is underway. The Travel Basketball program will be completing its season in late February or early March and the Recreational season shortly after that. The Department has nominated several athletes to compete in the Connecticut Basketball All Star Classic on February 19. These athletes will be recognized by the Department for their achievements as well.

Registrar

- The Registrars are in the process of finalizing preparations for early voting for the State's Presidential Preference Primary. Early voting will occur at Town Hall on March 26, 27, 28, and 30 from 10:00am to 6:00pm each day. The Primary Election day is April 2 with voting at the High School.
- In advance of the start of early voting, the Registrars will be presenting a Voter Information Session on Thursday, March 7 in the Town Hall. The presentation will start at 6:30pm and will allow voters to understand the current process for casting a ballot in advance of the election day.

Senior Center

- The Senior Center continues to see strong attendance and is providing transportation assistance for a variety of needs. Over 200 rides were provided to the older adults of the community in January.
- The AARP Tax Assistance program started on February 5 and continues by appointment in February.

- The Center is hosting an Aging Gracefully series in February. Topics include VA Benefits, and Hospice and Home Health Care. Sessions have been well received and will continue next week.
- Next week's special programming is a Valentines Special Event. There will be sweet treats and entertainment from local resident Bill Naughton, who will entertain with his renditions of classic songs.
- On February 20 beginning at 11am, the Town's Clean Energy Task Force is sponsoring an informational meeting with Eversource regarding the SCEF program (Shared Clean Energy Facilities) at the Senior Center in person and via zoom.

Youth and Family Services

- The Prevention Coordinator continues to advise the Bring Change to Mind club at the High School, which facilitates conversations about mental health and prevention between about 25 students. The Prevention Coordinator also started a prevention club at the middle school with the help of the Teen Peer Advocates. This club aims to bring together students to talk about substance use in young people and learn facts about substances such as alcohol, marijuana, and nicotine. The goal is to give students skills and information to help them break away from social and peer pressure they are experiencing or will experience in the future.
- The Prevention Partnership is holding a focus group on Thursday, February 22 beginning at 5pm in the Town Hall for East Hampton youth in grades 9-12 about vaping and marijuana. Information shared by the youth will be used to develop educational programs targeting vaping and marijuana use among youth.

Town Manager/Other

- As the FY 2025 Budget preparation process continues, the members of the Town Council, Board of Finance and the Board of Education will gather again in a Tri-Board meeting on Thursday, February 22 beginning at 5:30pm to review draft information on the Town's budget, including education, general government and capital expenses. The public is welcome and encouraged to attend and public comments will be taken. Additionally, the Town Council will be discussing at its upcoming meeting additional opportunities for the public to provide input on the Town's budget in informal sessions.
- Town staff is addressing a few water quality complaint matters in private wells that have been referred to the Town from the State. Under State Law, it is possible the Town will

need to participate in the actions to address the issues, which involve the presence of Sodium and Chlorides as well as PFAS in the ground water. Currently, testing is being undertaken and plans are being developed for future work related to the Sodium and Chloride issues and those will be addressed in the future. In the interim, the Town is providing drinking water to the impacted households. Staff is in communication with the State regarding the wells impacted by PFAS and the Town will be taking over the management of the mitigation systems that have been installed at the properties. Staff and the consulting engineers will be exploring options for long term remedies.

- Staff is finalizing a Request for Proposals document for mowing services on Town owned facilities and anticipates publishing the RFP next week. The RFP seeks pricing for three different categories of mowing including mowing around buildings, mowing of athletic fields and mowing of cemeteries. The effort is intended to identify areas where work can be performed more efficiently or at lower cost.

DC

cc: Management Staff

January 2024

Monthly Report

At a glance:

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

- The Strategic Planning Cohort team attended meetings on January 17, January 24, and January 31. A staff workshop has been scheduled for February 16 and Ms. Cachuela hopes to conduct one with the Board in either late February or at their regular March meeting. The Library intends to conduct a community survey, of which a draft is being produced for approval by Town Council, as well as hold several Community Conversation sessions during the month of March.
- Work has begun on the teen space project. Shelving has been moved and some furniture relocated to other town departments in preparation for the new furniture. Our next step is to move collections, including bringing the Large Print collection closer to the front of the building to make it more easily accessible for the patrons most likely to use that collection. New furniture for the space is expected to arrive in the next week or two.

Strategic Plan Actions Update

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

- The annual Cabin Fever History Series returned with remarkable interest this year, bringing an audience of about 75 people to meet Connecticut author Anastasia Mills Healy on Saturday, January 13. The series continues monthly through March and is seeing significantly more pre-registration than recent years. The Cabin Fever History Series is a collaborative event between the Library and Chatham Historical Society. *(Welcoming & Vibrant) (Informative & Collaborative)*
- Attendance at Saturday Family Storytime is growing, with record attendance this month. This program began last year in an effort to meet the needs of working families and create an opportunity for them to attend our early literacy programming. *(Welcoming & Vibrant) (Accessible & Inclusive)*

Department Reports

Administration:

This section contains general updates and news about Library administration.

- The Friends of the Library held their monthly meeting on January 8, during which they discussed their upcoming Latin Night Fundraiser at Rule of 3 Brewing.
- The Library Advisory Board held its monthly meeting on January 8. Ms. Blanda reported that Ms. Cachuela will present the FY 24/25 budget to the Board at their February meeting and provided them with an update on the Strategic Planning process.
- Ms. Cachuela attended the Arts and Culture Commission meeting on January 18, during which the Commission discussed the upcoming ceremony for their donation of a painting to Memorial School, newly received grant submissions, and plans for their 2024 Garden Tour.
- New Children's Librarian Dylan Waddington is expected to start on February 5.
- On January 24, Ms. Cachuela attended the LION Resource Committee meeting. The group is currently working to schedule information sessions with several library vendors to determine if their products are a good fit for the LION consortium members. Potential additions to LION's services include a customizable library app and a collection development tool.
- Ms. Cachuela completed 6-month Probationary Reviews for two part time staff members.

Children's Department:

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

- All About Art, a special storytime held on January 17, was full of messy fun and well-received by participants. Overall storytime attendance remains strong right now, with programs frequently having more than 35 attendees.
- The first of three popular Lego-themed STEMtastic programs was held on January 29. These programs are being produced in partnership with UCONN 4H.
- The department is busy preparing for this year's Take Your Child to the Library Day, which will take place on February 5 and feature a morning Family Storytime and a make your own ice cream station in the afternoon.

Adult / Young Adult Department:

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

- Poor weather kept attendance at the Exam Prep & Plan program low on Tuesday, January 16th, but there were a significant number of high school students in the library throughout the week studying and preparing for exams.
- The monthly LibrarYoga program with Amie Meacham has seen increasing interest and attendance in recent months. Amie has graciously agreed to continue to provide this free yoga practice on a monthly basis through the spring.
- Rob Tschudin of Tschudin Chocolates and Confections of Middletown gave a presentation on chocolate including types, uses, and his experience on two Food Network shows. Participants were able to sample and enjoy many kinds of chocolate.

Circulation and Technical Services Department:

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

- Renewal periods for eBook cards has changed from 1 year to 3 in order to facilitate access and encourage use of our online resources.
- Public Service Associate Kel attended a book repair workshop at Eastern Connecticut State University.
- Several new items are in the process of being added to the Library of Things.

Strategic Plan Indicators of Success

Circulation

Borrowers (*Accessible and Inclusive*)

	+/- Last Month	January	December	November
Adults (borrowing physical items)	+87	1253	1166	1156
Children (borrowing physical items)	+12	266	254	244
Corporate (borrowing physical items)	+1	12	11	12
Staff (borrowing physical items)	+4	19	15	16
SUBTOTAL		1550	1446	1428
Overdrive	-43	212	255	254
Hoopla	+50	293	243	239
SUBTOTAL		505	498	493
TOTAL	+111	2055	1,944	1,921

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

	2024	2023	2023	2023	2022	2021
	January	December	November	January	January	January
Adult Collection	3302	2815	2761	3,295	3,526	4,127
Children's Collection	3086	2810	2633	2,595	2,418	2,560
Young Adult	434	365	358	380	269	207

SUBTOTAL	6,822	5,990	5,752	6,270	6,213	6,894
eBooks – Overdrive	986	1403	1362	986	1,022	773
eBooks - Hoopla	842	711	700	601	587	556
eBooks – RB Digital*	0*	0*	0*	0*	0*	0*
SUBTOTAL	1,828	2,144	2062	1,587	1,609	1,329
TOTAL	8,650	8,104	7,014	7,857	7,822	8,223

*RB Digital was discontinued.

Visits

Door Counter (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
5,019	6,497	3,964*	4,639	4,122	4,829	4,654					

*New Door Counter for September

Programs and Partners

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

<i>Onsite Programs</i>				<i>Participants</i>		
	<i>January 2024</i>	<i>January 2023</i>	<i>January 2022**</i>	<i>January 2024</i>	<i>January 2023</i>	<i>January 2022**</i>
Adult	12	7	3	143	45	43
Children's	20	19	17	550	357	223
Young Adult	5	4	8	30	10	48
Intergenerational	0	0	1	0	0	5
SUBTOTAL	37	30	29	723	412	319
<i>Self-Directed Activities</i>				<i>Participants</i>		
Adult	1	4		18	43	
Children's	4	4		332	114	
Young Adult	1	1		10	17	
Intergenerational	0	0		0	0	
SUBTOTAL	6	8		360	174	
<i>Offsite Programs</i>				<i>Attendance</i>		
Adult	0	1		0	1	
Children's	4	4		54	64	
Young Adult	0	0		0	0	
Intergenerational	0	0		0	0	
SUBTOTAL	4	5		54	65	
TOTAL	47	43		1137	651	

**Program statistics for 2022 shown here include combined totals for in-person, self-directed and offsite. Specific stats for self-directed and offsite will be reported beginning in July, the first month those numbers are archived and available.

Promotion

Website (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

	+/- last month	January	December	November
Users	+129	1755	1626	1556
Sessions	+417	3089	2672	2686
Page Views	+771	4383	3612	3895
Events Calendar	+919	2505	1586	1343

- **5 Most Popular Pages:** Library Homepage, Hours & Contact Info, Library Staff, Museum Passes, Children's Programs & Events

Social Media (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

	+/- last month	January	December	November
Facebook				
Reactions/Comments/Shares	**	312	458**	298**
Page Reach	-1057	4806	5863	4180
New Followers	+5	35	30	15
Instagram				
Reactions/Comments/Shares	**	188	5222**	5191**
Page Reach	-397	431	828	460
New Followers	-5	12	17	19

**Meta has changed the way they calculate Reactions/Comments/Shares/Views. This number no longer includes views and is now called 'Content Interactions'.