

MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council

FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager

DATE: October 4, 2019

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.

Council Meeting Follow Up

- Concern was expressed regarding the use of grant funds for the environmental clean-up and the need for those to be repaid. Staff is still working to confirm that funds for the building at 13 Watrous Street are not subject to repayment or recovery.
- Concern was expressed regarding the closure of the stairs to the Building and Planning Department offices. Pricing has been received to replace the stairs so that they are available in the winter months. Unfortunately, due to corrosion and degradation of the substructures, it is not possible to simply repair them at this point. Staff will be moving ahead with the replacement.

Building Department

- The Building Department is working to implement an online permit application process that will initially be used for minor or simple permits. The system will allow application for selected permits remotely at the convenience of the user. Soon the Department will be seeking a few contractors and other users to work with the process to test the product, which is part of the permit and document processing software the Department currently uses. Using the tester comments, the product will be fine tuned for roll-out to the public.

Finance

- The Town has once again received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting (CAFR) for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2018 from the Government

Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The GFOA established the CAFR program to encourage and assist state and local governments to go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare comprehensive annual financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure and to recognize individual governments that succeed in achieving that goal. The award would not have been possible without the teamwork of the entire finance department staff.

Library

- The Library is a co-applicant, along with the Hartford Public Library, Ferguson Library of Stamford, Wallingford Public Library and the Connecticut Library Consortium, for a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. If funded, this three-year grant would provide money for staff training and leadership development. Grant winners will be announced in early summer 2020.
- Borrowing continues to show higher levels over previous years. East Hampton borrowed over 8,500 items in September 2019, compared with about 5,500 in September of 2018.

Parks & Recreation

- The approved lake letter is expected to be delivered to residents on or about October 18. The letter will also include a copy of the lake brochure (see attached), which will take a few days to produce. Once those are received, the letter and brochures will be delivered to Quality Data Services company for delivery to the 1492 homes in the watershed. The total cost of this will be approximately \$1,900 and is anticipated to be funded through the Lake Commission budget.

Public Works

- The North Main Street project has moved to the paving portion of the work. As of this writing, the first layer of asphalt (binder) was installed on the entire roadway. Final paving is ongoing and will be complete not later than the first part of next week, dependent on good weather. This is followed by crosswalk and lane striping, final curb replacements and any final punch list work.

Registrar of Voters

- In anticipation of the upcoming November 5 election to be held at the Middle School, the Registrar has been preparing Poll Worker training, preparing Poll Workers, reviewing and cleaning voter record files, preparing for supervised voting at the Cobalt Lodge and attending training. Registration closes for this election on October 29, 2019.

Senior Center

- Community Renewal Team, Inc. (CRT) has resumed serving meals on Tuesdays and Thursdays, thanks to a volunteer at our Center. That person has applied for the position with CRT, which may be a step toward restoring full services. CRT also delivers homebound meals to people (Meals on Wheels) in the community and there has been a good response to advertising for volunteer drivers. We will look to start delivering meals using our volunteers within the month.
- The Center continues to provide a safe environment for the community's older adults to become involved via fitness programs, recreational activities, nutrition program, socialization and trips and program participation remains substantial. Daily attendance at the Center averages about 50 people plus walk-ins that may not check in. The Center started offering medical rides out of the area in July on a "first come first served" basis on days when there is no day trip planned. The program, which supplements the Middletown Transit program and provides trips to Marlborough doctors that are not in the Medical Center as well as to Wallingford and Glastonbury, started slowly but has grown and in October the Center is scheduled to give 7 rides to medical appointments for a small fee.
- Sixteen day trips were held over the summer for the seniors including local shopping trips and a very popular "Mystery Trip" that took a group to Ireland's Great Hunger Museum in Hamden. 188 people participated in those trips.
- The Center continues to be one of our two intake sites for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program. The Center helped 20 people apply for energy assistance in the month of September.
- The Senior Advocacy Group will be sponsoring a Candidate forum on October 23 at the Center beginning at 6:30pm.

WPCA/Joint Facilities

- Upgrades to the equipment at the North Main Street sewer pumping station are continuing and are a few weeks from completion. It is anticipated that the underground work will be completed in late October and the area will be prepared, seeded and mulched. It is not known whether there will be any growth so staff will look to ensure the site, which is adjacent to Christopher Brook and the Lake, is protected with appropriate sediment and erosion control measures during winter and spring.
- Flushing of the Village Center water system was performed this week and showed good results. The storage tank for that system was inspected and cleaned in September and the final step in the process was to flush the system to ensure that sediment and minerals are removed. Staff was please by the clarity and quality of the water after the recent replacement and reconditioning of the treatment equipment and flushing of the system, which should be set for quite some time.
- Bills for the October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 term have been mailed by the Collector's Office to our 2,731 customers in the amount of about \$1.5 million. Payments are due by November 1, 2019 after which they are delinquent. About \$500,000 of this amount is used for operation and maintenance of the collection system and the balance is paid to Joint Facilities for treatment related costs.

Youth and Family Services

- The Department is well on the way to getting qualifying residents approved for Energy Assistance as the Town's other intake point for this program. The Department has been taking appointments since August and will continue to do so through April. Any approved assistance is available starting November 13. The program is administered by the State and funded through a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Block Grant.
- The Town's Partnership for Success Grant, which funds the East Hampton Prevention Partnership, has entered its last fiscal year. Efforts have begun to identify future sources of funding in order to maintain the coalition's work to reduce youth substance use.

Town Manger/Other

- The Town Hall project is progressing and currently remains on schedule for substantial completion in March 2020. Exterior work, including window and door installation and

masonry, is ongoing and nearing completion. Siding work will commence in the upcoming weeks. Site work is progressing rapidly as sidewalks and other concrete work is finishing up. It is expected that asphalt installation will begin soon on the northern or front side of the building with a plan to finish these areas by November 15. Other areas will likely remain unpaved until the spring to allow completion of heavy work in those areas. Site restoration work will progress and, to the extent possible, grass seed and mulch will be installed by October 15. After that date, areas not seeded will be protected from erosion by another means until spring. Permanent electrical power to the facility is expected to be complete next week and major elevator construction will follow shortly thereafter. Inside framing and drywall installation is continuing and the interior shape of the building is truly developing.

- Staff and some Council members have been contacted by concerned residents regarding the recent increase in the Sewer costs. Materials provided by the WPCA are attached to this report. As a reminder, in accordance with State and local law, rates for the sewer system are established by the WPCA while rates for the water system are established by the Town Council. Water rates were established in about June while sewer rates were finalized late this summer after a public hearing by the WPCA. The rate was established by the WPCA based on its current financial state as well as a careful evaluation of the upcoming capital replacement and improvement needs. Additionally, the WPCA was not able to continue a practice of using retained earnings to off set operational and maintenance expenses. The WPCA continues to evaluate its long-term financial plan and is attempting to project rate needs into the future. I have invited representatives of the WPCA to attend an upcoming Council meeting to present this information to the Council and the public if that is the Council's desire.

DC

Attachments

Cc: Management Staff