


MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 
DATE: March 18, 2022
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

- The Library staff is preparing to begin distribution of the Kindness Kits as part of April's Kindness EHxtravaganza, the month-long project devoted to spreading kindness made possible due to a generous grant given by the Peach Pit Foundation in partnership with the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. Kindness kits include activities for families to do together around the kindness theme. Families are asked to preregister for Kindness Kits and they will be available beginning April 1. Additionally, the Library will be hosting a silent auction, April 4 – 16 to benefit East Hampton's Connecticut Draft Horse Rescue and Our Companions Animal Rescue and is accepting donations from local artists of their work for the event until Friday, April 1. More information can be found on the library's website at <https://easthamptonpubliclibrary.org/about/kindness-extravaganza/>
- The Library welcomed a therapy dog for the Teen Friday program on Friday, March 11. The program was well attended, and teens asked for more therapy dog visits. Due to the popularity among not only teens but other patrons as well, more therapy dog visits are being planned. For younger ages, there will be an upcoming story time program for ages 3 – 8 with the therapy dog on April 2.

Parks and Recreation

- Preparations of fields are underway for the spring sports season with practices at the High School and Middle School locations starting March 19. This work includes a collaborative effort of the Parks and Recreation, Public Works and Board of Education staff and athletic boosters to build a new baseball batting cage to replace the old batting cage at the High School.
- Summer program offerings are currently open for registration and have already seen a large number of registrations. This year the department will again apply for the State of Connecticut Enrichment Grant, through which the Town was awarded \$20,000 last summer. The grant

allowed the Town to bring new program opportunities to the youth of East Hampton at lower costs.

- Final revisions were made to the workplan for upcoming watershed improvement projects and an agreement between DEEP and the Town is close to completion. Staff is working closely with Town engineers to create a formal RFP for these projects and expects to be ready for release by late April. These projects include the following locations: Christopher Brook, Edgewater Hills pond, Edgemere stream near pump house, Middlesex Land Trust property off Bay Rd, Paul's and Sandy's Too property, Brookhaven Beach Association, Sears Park, and Spellman Point.
- The Conservation Lake Commission has been working with NEAR and EverBlue Lakes to develop recommendations for future in lake treatments. The Commission plans to present a plan to the Town Council in the coming months that will likely include pursuit of State approval for additional or revised treatments in Lake Pocotopaug.

Police/Prevention Coordinator

- The Police Department is participating in a program presented by the Town's Prevention Coordinator, which is a pilot project to help combat the opioid crisis in Middlesex County and the region. The scope of the program is to provide follow up to overdose survivors, drug use prevention, harm reduction, and access-to-treatment services for adults and their families in this area. Through the program, after the Police Department responds to a drug overdose or other drug use incident, the victim and family are visited by a social worker who attempts to connect those impacted with addiction and support services. This program works in conjunction with local Police Departments, Connecticut State Police, the Office of Probation Services, the Connecticut Harm Reduction Alliance, and a network of Drug Free Communities local prevention councils. The pilot project is presented by the Alliance for Prevention & Wellness (APW), which is the Regional Behavioral Health Action Organization (RBHAO) for the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Region II service area. The mission of APW is to foster positive mental health by preventing substance misuse and other health-risk behaviors, and by building resources that promote wellness. For more information on APW, which is a program of BH Care, a private, non-profit devoted to mental health, substance use, domestic violence and other health-risk behavior care, can be found at [APW-CT.org](https://harmreduction-ct.org/index.html) or <https://harmreduction-ct.org/index.html>.

Public Works

- The Public Works Department will begin spring maintenance activities such as street sweeping and gravel road maintenance shortly as the weather becomes consistently warmer. Over the past few weeks, crews have continued filling potholes and addressing issues on the gravel roads

caused by frost and wet weather conditions. Once the gravel roads are dry, staff will be regrading and compacting them to bring them back into shape. Drainage improvement projects are also being developed for some of these roads to improve their winter and wet weather performance. The street sweeper will begin spring sweeping operations in the upcoming week.

- Weather permitting, the small drainage project at 82 Main Street should begin this upcoming week as well. This project intends to replace a failed metal drainage pipe that conveys the Town's drainage from Barton Hill Rd to the State drainage system on Rt 196 (Main Street). This project should last approximately one week barring any unforeseen circumstances.
- This week, the Department was called in to investigate a sink hole that had formed in Main Street in the area of the Congregational Church. Investigation revealed that a degraded and failed metal pipe had caused the issue. While crews were able to perform a spot repair, this is cause for concern regarding the integrity of the rest of that system. Main Street is slated to be repaved this coming fall but as staff investigates the storm water system under the road, this schedule may have to be rearranged should this pipe network need to be replaced.

Youth and Family Services

- Youth Services will begin holding teen drop-in events in its Town Hall offices on March 22 from 4-6 p.m. The drop-in center will be open each Tuesday until the end of the school year. Each week, participants will discuss an important topic in a relaxed, calming environment. Youth Services will provide dinner, snacks, and an activity. During drop-in center hours, a degree of tutoring help will also be available. Staff is working to identify students from the high school to help during drop-in center hours. Funding through a State DCF Enhancement Grant allows this program to be free to all youth who attend East Hampton schools or are homeschooled.
- The DCF Enhancement Grant will also support the Department's Strengthening Families program, which will include family dinner nights starting on Tuesday, April 26. Up to six families per evening are invited to reserve a time slot (4:30, 5:45, or 7 p.m.) to enjoy a meal, games and activities that are intended to promote conversation and enhance the family unit. April 26 will be an Italian night and will include baked ziti, meatballs, salad, bread, and dessert. Meals will come from local eateries around Town and be served to families by Youth Services staff. To extend the reach of the grant, the department may be implementing a small charge per person or family. The program is expected to be held on April 26, May 31, June 28, and July 26.
- The Department will be holding a Town-wide photography contest open to East Hampton youth ages 13-18 in collaboration with Epoch Arts and with funding through the DCF Enhancement Grant. The contest challenge is to capture a unique view of the Town in a black and white photograph. All images will be unique to East Hampton and an opportunity for youth to show how they view their town. With the wonderful partnership of the local community, the

following businesses have graciously offered to hang winning photographs in their establishments for the community to view: Sweet Jeans, East Hampton Public Library, The Dublin, and Rossini's. We will also showcase winning photographs at Town Hall and create a display wall at Social Services as part of our ongoing mental health and wellbeing art installation. The first-place winner will receive a \$150 Amazon Gift Card. Second place, \$75 and third place, \$50.

- The Department continues working with vulnerable households by providing food assistance and case management services including 26 energy assistance cases; 3 Operation Fuel cases; 4 DSS cases; 2 electric cases; and 8 general assistance cases. The Department has put its counseling services on hold temporarily due to a lack of available clinicians. The Department is exploring options with areas colleges and universities as well as partnering with licensed clinicians for services.

Town Manager/Other

- The Town's COVID rates have dropped to the point where reported cases are below the level at which they are included in the State's framework. Officially, the figure is reported as less than 5 cases in the two week period. Residents are encouraged to maintain safe habits to avoid spreading or suffering severe effects of any illness like staying home when sick, wearing masks when it is appropriate, and staying up to date on vaccines. All who are eligible continue to be encouraged to receive the COVID vaccine, which is available through Chatham Health District and other locations. About 75% of the Town's residents are fully vaccinated and about 45% have received booster shots.
- The Council's Water Subcommittee continues to meet with the Town's Engineer, Environmental Partners (EP), to move forward with the next steps of water system improvements. At its most recent meeting, the committee reviewed information on potential water sources developed by EP through site visits and computer modeling and determined a list of locations that would be the subject of testing to determine current availability of water and the quality of the available water. As the initial steps wrap up, the Committee will be reviewing plans to finalize the Preliminary Engineering Report to the State and will develop the scope of work for upcoming steps to test the well sites, determine the preferred source site, develop preliminary plans and begin the grant application process.

DC

cc: Management Staff