

MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager
DATE: April 23, 2020
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

- Staff continues to monitor security matters for Town meetings and activities being conducted via Zoom and other platforms. Steps are taken for each meeting to prevent attacks or mishaps that have been experienced elsewhere including the use of "waiting rooms," designation of specific participants, limiting the ability to share screens and limiting the ability of attendees that are not participants in the meetings. We have also been monitoring the guidance from the FBI and other sources to ensure that appropriate steps are being taken.

Collector's Office

- Earlier this month, the Office sent the normal notices to taxpayers who were delinquent on their payments from FY 2020 and prior indicating that the Town would be filing a lien on the property. The notices, which were slightly "softened" this year, remind the taxpayer of the delinquency, their payment responsibilities and options and that we will place the lien to protect our ability to collect the taxes. Less than 100 of our 3,000 plus taxpayers received such a notice.

Fire Marshal/Emergency Management

- The Fire Marshal's office, which handles open burning permits, has converted the permit application to a fillable PDF, which is accessible online. The form can be completed and emailed to the office, processed for approval and then emailed back to the submitter eliminating the need to visit the office. There is no fee for open burning permits.
- The Emergency Management Department currently has the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in a monitoring or standby phase and it has been in this state since the local emergency declaration. This means that, if needed, the EOC could be opened in a

short period of time. Staff is also attending numerous meetings with state officials as well as a weekly meeting with the heads of the Police Department, Fire Department, Ambulance Association, and the Town Manager.

- The Emergency Management Department continues to coordinate the Town's access to supplies including the extra limited supply of gloves and masks we have been able to get. These are being distributed to the first responding agencies to supplement their supplies.
- Through a generous donation, the Office was able to obtain sanitizing solutions which have been distributed to various Town departments.

Library

- Library staff continues to be available by phone and email Monday through Friday for patron concerns and needs. Notable calls include helping patrons locate and download e-resources, troubleshooting unemployment and consumer reports databases, and helping patrons determine which town organization to call for various needs and questions.
- The Library also continues with virtual programming. Since closing to the public, the library has hosted daily virtual programs for children, teens, and adults including a live story time on Zoom that is attended by 12-19 families per week. Families follow along to the same routine used for in-person story time prior to the closure, with moments of the event carved out for children to look at and wave to other children. Staff is receiving feedback from families who express their joy in watching their child interact with others in their community. Patrons have also enjoyed cookbook and fiction book clubs for adults, LEGO Challenges for children and teens, and new online e-resource tutorials.
- It has become more important than ever to get the Library's e-resources into the hands of East Hampton. Patrons now have the ability to acquire an eBook Library card online that provides residents with full access to thousands of e-resources like ebooks and audiobooks from Hoopla, Overdrive and RBDigital. Other resources of note available to all patrons who have a library card or get the ebook card include Creative Big, a crafting site, and Ancestry.com.

Parks and Recreation

- Distance programming continues in the Department, but the staff is now considering reopening plans for when the restrictions are lifted. The Department has pushed start dates for all programs back to the second week in June and lowered the registration maximum to 20 participants for each program to try and keep our numbers low in case restrictions are still in place during these times.

- It is likely that the Recreation Department will be getting some televised coverage related to its "Rock Trail" program. The program encourages residents to paint a rock with a message of hope and kindness and to take that rock to Sears Park. At the park, the rock is added to the "trail" of other rocks and a picture is posted to social media. Residents have been participating and the project has caught the attention of WFSB. Friday morning, staff were planning to meet with the station to film a segment. Watch for information on this story as it comes in.

- Sears Park opening of the pavilion has been pushed back until at least the second week of June for reservations on weekends. Those who have registered for weekend use prior to this have been given a refund or credit to choose another weekend following the second week of June. Staff has also delay turning on the water at Sears Park pavilion to mid-May instead of mid-April.

- With some level of optimism, Staff will conduct interviews for all seasonal employees (lifeguards, gate attendants, camps staff and concession workers) the last week in April. These interviews have been delayed in an effort gain more insight as to what will occur this summer. All applicants will be interviewed via zoom or facetime, and those who are hired will be made aware of our situation as it unfolds.

- Summer programming held at schools is in question at this point based on the unknowns. The uncertainty of what group sizes will be allowed and school availability leaves summer programming in question, which could impact as much as 80% of the Department's summer programs (roughly 25 different programming and child care opportunities). The Town Manager and Recreation Department staff have been in communication with the Superintendent of Schools regarding coordination of the Town's various summer offerings (Recreation and BOE) and how decisions will be made. As more information is known about the restrictions under which programming will occur, building use and programming decisions will be made together. Undoubtedly, all parties

will need to be creative and programming may need to be adjusted as to size, number and location to accommodate as many participants as possible.

- The Lake Aeration project has been moving along and both compressor sites have now been identified. The locations are at Edgemere condominiums and 60 Spellman Point. One Easement Agreement has been sent to the Council for approval and the second is being finalized with the property owner. Additionally, staff is working with EverBlue, Eversource and our electrical contractor to construct the sites and wire in the electricity. As of this writing, it is expected that the system will be operational by the first week in June.

Police

- The Department has completed another phase in the Town radio upgrade project as all Officers have now received new portable radios. On May 4, new radio equipment will be installed on the roof of the new Town Hall to facilitate communication with the Baker Hill Tower. On May 11, when the State of Connecticut connects the Public Safety Data Network (PSDN) line to the new police department, the new radio antennas on the Town Hall will also be connected to the PSDN line, which will greatly enhance communication abilities to Glastonbury Dispatch as we will be transmitting over a fiber line instead of tower to tower.
- The Police Department has also granted three birthday wishes to young children in town who were unable to have birthday parties due to the COVID-19 virus. The parents thought it would be a nice idea if the Officers came to the house and put their lights and sirens on as a way to celebration each of the birthdays. Officers were happy to do their part during these tough times to deliver some birthday celebrations to these children. The smiles from the children were PRICELESS.

Public Works

- Milling and paving on Lake Drive and Meeks Point began this week. Public Works Crews have wrapped up the preparation work for the project. The two roads should be paved within two weeks. Lake Drive is slated to be paved first beginning Monday April 27th with Meeks Point being paved later that week. The paving component of the project is weather dependent.

- SumCo Eco contracting has completed the contracted amount of soil excavation and removal at 13 Watrous Street. We are currently awaiting results from the testing lab to determine how we will be capping the site and if a future remediation project will be needed. Public Works crews have begun backfilling the excavation.
- We will begin our routine street sweeping the week of April 27th
- We will begin our annual restoration of the towns dirt roads beginning the week May 4th possibly earlier if the weather is favorable.

Senior Center

- The senior center is maintaining its presence in the community, with appropriate social distancing. Virtual programming is taking place weekly, including Bingo, Yoga, Book Club and a writer's workshop. Staff is constantly looking at other creative programming in anticipation of a longer duration of social distancing. All programs are being well attended as participants get over the learning curve of joining a meeting online. Information is on the Center's website and Facebook page.
- Community Renewal Team(CRT) is providing 'Grab &Go' lunches to 20 individuals in our community and is delivering Meals on Wheels to the 6 people that were on the program prior to the Covid-19 Outbreak.
- With the assistance of the CERT volunteers, the volunteer shopping program has been implemented where groceries are purchased for Older Adults in need and delivered to their homes.
- We are producing a monthly newsletter, instead of the previous schedule of every two months. A more frequent, smaller publication will keep people more up to date with Town news and programming/services. The newsletter reaches more than 500 people via email and postal service.
- Center staff continues outreach calls to help keep people connected and aware of services available to them. Community volunteers have made cloth masks and those are being distributed as they are available and requested.

WPCA

- With the onset of spring, the plant will start disinfecting the effluent with Sodium Hypochlorite next week. The spring cleaning of wet wells is taking place. Staff uses the vacuum truck to clean the wet wells in East Hampton and the association towns. The heavy rains and power outages this month caused a few issues but the crews were able to handle it with no bypass of the collection system.

Youth and Family Services

- There has been a lot of interest in the activity bags. The Department received a total of 216 orders, which were vetted to ensure accuracy and to eliminate duplications. The mass order has been placed for materials and bags will be assembled by staff after cleaning. Department staff will then handle non-contact delivery to the houses.
- Calls continue coming in for energy assistance as well as from those who are reporting having trouble paying rent. The Governor's Executive Order No. 7X prohibits landlords from initiating eviction proceedings before July 1, 2020, so we are reminding callers that of that protection. Calls coming in from people looking to make monetary or food donations are being re-routed to the Food Pantry, which indicates that it is doing well through the generosity of our residents despite an increase in distributions. Staff maintains contact with the Food Pantry and Senior Center to offer support.
- Counseling services remain impacted by the situation as both the State's and Town's resources are cut short by the pandemic. It has been challenging but staff continues to help our residents as well as possible including telephone support. Fortunately, staff has been able to refer calls to the Senior Center for those who are having difficulty getting out to shop for groceries.

Town Manager/Other

- Work at the new Town Hall has shifted to close out work for the contractor and installation of the new furniture and technology. The furniture contractor is onsite performing installations, which should be complete by the end of next week. Additionally, Town staff and the Town's technology contractor have been onsite installing the computer network and phone system. The timeline remains on the revised schedule and staff anticipates moving Town operations on May 7 through May 9 with operations beginning out of the new location on May 11. During this time, please expect delays in response to phone calls, emails and other messages as staff offices will be in transition.

- As noted in the Budget transmittal letter, staff has been able to lock in pricing for the Town's fuel needs well into the future (Kudos to Finance Director Jylkka). Through June 2021, the Town will pay \$1.81 per gallon for diesel fuel and through December 2021, the Town will pay \$1.77 for regular fuel. If prices dip below these figures at retail locations, staff has been evaluating ways for the Town to take advantage of those savings without impacting the long-term savings we expect to realize with the secured pricing.

- As always, residents are reminded to be diligent as they continue to avoid contact with others. In general, to prevent the spread of COVID-19, wear a cloth covering over the mouth and nose as required by the Governor's order, maintain "social distancing" of at least 6 feet, stay away from group meetings and other opportunities for transmission, wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds and stay home if you are sick. For the most current updates and recommendations, visit ct.gov/coronavirus. For general questions, call 2-1-1.

DC

cc: Management Staff