


MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 
DATE: May 21, 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

- Library Director Ellen Paul and Children's Librarian April Hannon gave a presentation at the Connecticut Library Association annual conference earlier in May titled: Rising Circulation in the Time of COVID-19 about the success our library has experienced in circulation growth even during the pandemic. The Library's circulation has increased 72% in the last four years in contrast to national and state-wide trends. Staff has been asked to give their presentation again for the Connecticut State Library and will be doing so next week.

- Given CDC and State of Connecticut changes to COVID regulations and restrictions, the Library has made a number of adjustments to services including:
 - Masks are encouraged but not required. Out of respect for the many children who visit the Library and cannot be vaccinated, the Library is asking patrons to continue to wear masks.

 - The Community Room and Local History room are re-opening. The Local History Room is open on a first come first served basis. The Library will begin taking reservations to use the community room for dates after July 1, 2021.

 - The Library will continue to quarantine returned items for 48 hours on the advice of the Chatham Health Director.

 - The Library will be returning all furniture to the floor however children's toys will stay in storage on the advice of the Chatham Health Director.

- All Library programs and events this summer will be held in person and outdoors.
- Curbside pickup for library materials and mobile printing will remain available. Residents can call the Library to schedule a pickup.

Parks and Recreation

- The Department is now fully staffed with four Park Maintainers and work continues to ramp up as grounds are prepared for the summer season. Mulching and weeding beds at all locations has started in preparation for Memorial Day, Graduation at the High School and the start of Summer Camp at Sears Park.
- This month is shaping up to be another strong month of program revenue, boat ramp pass sales and Sears Park Stickers continue to be the main focus of in-person visits to the office.
- The Conservation - Lake Commission appointed new leadership. Chuck Yenker was appointed Chair and Jack Solomon was appointed as Vice Chair.
- The grant process continues to move along with DEEP and currently another meeting is scheduled to review the proposed scope of work that will be part of the contract for this year's projects to develop multiple small areas around the lake that trap and clean surface water runoff before it enters Lake Pocotopaug. Once approved by DEEP, staff will proceed with finalizing easement documentation with private property owners.
- Following the approval from the Town Council at its last meeting to proceed with the proposed scope of work for the High School athletic fields, SLR is now in the process of completing a formal RFP that will be released for bid. It is anticipated that the committee will recommend a contractor to the Council by early July and that construction will begin shortly thereafter.

Police

- The Department recently completed the final testing of the public safety radio system (Police/Fire/EMS), which took place over three days. The Town's vendor for installation of the new system, Utility Communications, was required to provide 95% coverage over the entire town for the new system. The results were very impressive, the new radio system provided at a minimum 97.8% coverage for both inbound and outbound

transmissions across all public safety radio channels, which is a significant improvement over the previous system. The cut over to the new radio system will occur in phases. The police department will go first, which is slated for May 26.

- The Department recently applied for and received a \$675 tuition waiver for Sgt. Hardie Burgin to attend a First Line Supervisory Course. The seven day course is sponsored by the Spector Criminal Justice Training Network.
- On May 8, the Cromwell Police Department requested assistance from surrounding police departments for an active shooter incident at one of their hotels. They activated the "Blue Plan," which is a mutual aid agreement between area departments to send officers into different towns to assist during rapidly evolving critical incidents. The Department sent one officer to the scene who played an active role in the successful resolution of the incident.

Public Works

- Public Works crews have completed the pavement shimming work on Mott Hill and White Birch Roads. These two roads along with Portland Reservoir, Ridgeview Drive, and Brack Farm are scheduled to be chip sealed at the end of June.
- Crews from Public Works are also continuing with gravel road maintenance, annual village clean up, cemetery clean up and mowing.
- The Edgerton Street Drainage Project will resume after Memorial Day and will continue through the summer until completion.
- Crack sealing has been completed on Hog Hill Road, Hurd Park Road, Haddam Neck Road, Emily Lane, and Carriage Drive. Asphalt crack sealing is a pavement maintenance procedure which helps to extend pavement structure life by helping to keep water from entering the pavement structure.

Senior Center

- The Senior Center will open services to in-person programs June 1. Staff is modifying the programs to accommodate safety protocols and programs will be offered in-person, outside, inside and via zoom as appropriate. Initially, group sizes and time frames for programs will be limited. Staff will re-evaluate all components and programs as needed.

- The first intergenerational writing program occurred in cooperation with a high school English class. The adults and students wrote on the theme "At 17 I was...." The instructor then guided the group through reading the items and producing a combined poem. They will finish the program this week.
- Water's Edge Center for Health and Rehabilitation and Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation Center sponsored the drive-thru luncheon that occurred this week and in which 80 people participated. Staff also gave out recycle bags with handouts, lunches and the Senior Center's June 1 opening announcement.
- The Center held a very successful outdoor painting program with ten participants and the Lunch Bunch group was able to secure a speaker (through the use of technology) from Superior Farms, a lamb farm out of California.
- The Senior Center is developing and will be implementing a training orientation for Senior Center volunteers.

WPCA

- The Joint Facilities/WPCA is pleased to announce that it has received its second Platinum Peak Performance Award from the National Association of Clean Water Agencies in recognition of six consecutive years of 100% compliance with clean water regulations. The Town's wastewater treatment plant has never violated the strict limits in place for the cleanliness of the water it treats and discharges into the Connecticut River. This is a continuing testament to the skill and attention paid by all the staff that serve in this important environmental protection capacity as it treats over 500 million gallons of water annually or about 1.45 million gallons each day.
- The WPCA is flushing lines in the Town water systems. Residents in these areas have been notified as this can stir up iron and other deposits that can impact service quality.
- Odor control options have been discussed with the Colchester WPCA to better address odor problems in East Hampton's Village Center. Colchester is in the process of having a pilot study done with a company called Remedia to implement a new method of controlling the odors related to wastewater that is transmitted from Colchester through the Village Center generally along the Air Line Trail on its way to the treatment plant.

- The replacement of the Colchester pipe that broke on the Air Line Trail is expected to go out to bid in the next couple of weeks, after review from DEEP, with construction to start late July or early August. Construction is estimated to take about a week.

Youth and Family Services

- The Department is coordinating seven (7) cases with the Juvenile Review Board through which youth offenders are offered community service oriented alternatives to typical penalties for offenses.
- Unfortunately, the Town was not successful in recruiting a candidate for the Prevention Coordinator position. Staff and members of the Prevention Partnership will be interviewing additional candidates soon.

Town Manager/Other

- East Hampton remains at the "Yellow Alert" level under the State's COVID Response Framework. The Town's case rate continues to dip further and the most recent information from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), shows that East Hampton had 9 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the last two weeks. That brings the Town's two-week average daily positivity rate to 5 per 100,000 population. Further, as of May 20, DPH information shows that about 57%, or almost 7,400 of the Town's residents have received at least the first dose of the vaccines.
- The State has revised its timeline for paving of RT 196 through Town. Milling of the pavement surface is now scheduled to begin on Monday, May 24 beginning at the South end of Rt 196 at its intersection with Rt 151 and moving north. The milling work is expected to last approximately one (1) week. Paving work, which is expected to take about two (2) weeks, is estimated to begin by June 11 and will initially run from Rt 16 and move south. As a reminder, RT 196 includes Lakeview Street, Summit Street, a portion of Main Street in the Village Center, Skinner Street and Young Street.

DC

cc: Management Staff