

MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 
DATE: May 5, 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.

Finance/IT

- The Finance Director and the IT Specialist held a kickoff meeting with the technology company performing the Town's IT vulnerability assessment. As an outcome of the assessment, the Town will receive actionable, prioritized recommendations to improve resilience of infrastructure and data to attacks.

Land Use

- The Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Government (RiverCOG), the Regional Planning Committee (RPC), and their consultant, Fitzgerald and Halliday, have been working on the first ever Regional Plan of Conservation and Development (RPOCD) for the Lower Connecticut River Valley region. The goal is to produce a Regional Plan that is relevant, useful, and facilitates towns working together on common issues and goals. Project work continued throughout 2020 and the draft RPOCD has been released for public comment. The RiverCOG has created an easy to use website to view the draft document and submit comments. The Public Comment period is open and will remain open through the Public Hearing, which is scheduled for June 30, 2021 with the goal of adoption shortly thereafter. The website to view the document and submit comments can be found here: <https://rivercog.org/projects/rpocd/draft-rpocd/>. The Planning and Zoning Commission will review the document and submit any comments to the RiverCOG Committee prior to the June 30 Public Hearing.

Library

- The East Hampton Library has been announced as the recipient of this year's Excellence in Public Library Service Award from the Connecticut Library Association for its work on the Candy Land event. This award is a testament to the creativity and teamwork of the Library staff. The ceremony will be held virtually on Thursday, May 13 at 1:30pm as part of the Association's annual conference.

- The Library Director's monthly report to the Library Advisory Board is attached to this Report.

Parks and Recreation

- The mowing season is in full force and staff has been working hard to keep up with the mowing at all locations. Seasonal maintainers will return on Monday, May 10.
- The Department recently approved funds from the Special Revenue account to create additional Pickle Ball Courts on the Tennis Courts at Sears Park. This will allow for the Department to open up opportunities for leagues and allow for games on the regulation nets for Pickle Ball. There is a big following in Town for Pickle Ball and this will be a significant opportunity for the public to play locally rather than traveling to other towns to play.
- April revenue ended the month at \$54,285 which is the highest ever recorded since tracking with our MyRec system. This shows that people are ready to come back themselves and to reintroduce their children to the programming offered by the Department. The addition of staff to help run these programs has proven successful.
- Summer program offerings continue to ramp up and, as a result, new COVID guidelines are changing. The Department is working on a Mask Wearing Policy that will be presented to the Town Council following decisions by the Governor and Legislature regarding extension of current guidance.
- The Recreation Department is excited to announce the hiring of Katherine Robinson as this year's Sears Park Summer Camp Director for our K-5 program. Kat brings years of experience working with children in a camp setting and currently is the Physical Education Teacher at Center Elementary School. Kat will be working alongside our Director of the 6th – 8th Program Meghan Wood. We are excited to have both Directors overseeing these programs for the summer months.

Police

- The Department is moving forward with the recruitment process and the background investigation phase is almost complete on our prime candidate. It is anticipated that a final recommendation to the Town Manager will be made by May 21.

- The Department, with the assistance of Finance Director Jeff Jylkka, has applied for a Federal Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant in the amount of \$4,908 which will allow us to replace seven (7) bullet resistant vests with a 50% reimbursement from the Federal Government.

Public Works

- Pavement shimming on White Birch Road is complete and crews have mobilized onto Mott Hill Road for pavement shimming there. Weather permitting, this work should be completed by the end of next week. Staff anticipates the chip sealing contractor will begin work on these roads in late May or early June.
- Gravel road maintenance is continuing. Several of the roads have been regraded and top dressed. Crews will continue with maintenance until all gravel roads have been addressed.
- Town-wide street sweeping program is wrapping up with just a few roads left. The first round of this work should be completed by the end of next week weather permitting.
- The Towns crack filling contractor will begin operations on Wednesday May 5, weather permitting. The roads to be addressed include Hog Hill Road, Hurd Park Road, and Haddam Neck Road. Crack filling is an important pavement maintenance practice that works to prevent water from seeping into existing pavement cracks and prematurely breaking up the pavement structure.

Senior Center

- The Senior Center is maintaining its open status by appointment only and is providing in-person outdoor programming as weather permits. The Center is also working with local health officials to prepare for more in-person options and full opening of the Center.
- The Center is planning another "Drive Thru Picnic" at the Town Hall for Thursday, May 20. The lunch, which is again sponsored by Water's Edge Center for Health and Rehabilitation and Marlborough Health and Rehabilitation Center, will salute veterans. Participants are encouraged to wear red, white and blue.
- The new commercial dishwasher has arrived at the Senior Center and will be installed as soon as contractors can upgrade the utilities for connection.

Youth and Family Services

- The Department continues to expand therapy offerings as it anticipates bringing on additional Marriage and Family Therapy interns to provide these no-cost services.
- Staff participated in a Rotary-sponsored mental health training session for the community held this past Saturday. Ten community members attended the session that focused on training non-practitioners to identify and render "first aid" to a person experiencing a mental health crisis.
- The Department is working with the schools to develop a program to address truancy issues through which the Department will offer its resources to assist the family in addressing the root causes of the truancy including therapy or other assistance.

Town Manager/Other

- East Hampton has improved to the "Orange Alert" level under the State's COVID Response Framework. As noted in the last Update, the most recent information from the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), shows East Hampton daily rate of new cases has dropped to 1 per day. If the Town can maintain or improve on that rate, the status will again improve to the Yellow Alert level. Additionally, the most recent reporting from the DPH indicates that over 6,700 (52%) Town residents have received at least their first dose of the vaccine.
- The State has announced its timeline for paving of RT 196 through Town. Milling of the pavement surface is scheduled to begin on June 1 at RT 66 and will move south. Paving is expected to begin on June 11 and will begin at RT 16. First, the section between RT 16 and north to RT 66 will be paved followed by the segment between RT 16 and south to RT 151 will be paved. As a reminder, RT 196 includes Lakeview Street, Summit Street, a portion of Main Street in the Village Center, Skinner Street and Young Street.
- The Town Meeting this week approved the purchase of the Christopher Property, which includes Christopher Pond. Staff will be working with the property owners to close on the purchase in early June using both grant funds and Town funds. Staff and the Conservation Lake Commission have already begun planning for improvements in the pond to have a positive impact on Lake Pocotopaug as outlined in the Lake's Nine Elements Plan.

- Staff continues to work through the hiring process for a few key employee positions. A second round of solicitation for interested applicants is ongoing for the Building Official position as the first round did not yield a candidate. After an interview process with staff and representatives of the Prevention Partnership, the Town is close to bringing on a new Prevention Coordinator and hopes to make an offer soon. Interviews were held recently for the Facilities Director position (Joint BOE/Town) and the top candidates will be returning soon for second interview activities.

DC

cc: Management Staff

April 2021 Monthly Report

At a glance:

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

- The Library is the recipient of an unsolicited \$17,000 grant from the Connecticut State Library. These funds originated from the American Rescue Plan Act and are to be used to respond to the pandemic. The Library is actively working with the State Library to understand what these funds can be spent on and will work with the Library Advisory Board to plan for their use.
- The Friends of the Library have donated \$2,000 to be used towards the Library's Summer Reading Program. The Library sincerely thanks all of the Friends for their hard work fundraising in this difficult time.

Strategic Plan Actions Update

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

- The Library administered a customer service survey. The survey was advertised on the Facebook page and through the email newsletter. 123 people responded to the four question survey, 81% of which said their last experience at the Library was exceptional. Full results are at the end of this report. *(Informative and Collaborative)*
- 4D Design and Decorating, the interior design and architecture firm with which library has contracted for space planning, toured the library and met with staff and board members to better understand the challenges of the library building. *(Welcoming and Vibrant)*
- The Library hosted New York Times best-selling author Martha Hall Kelly via Zoom. Kelly is the author of a historical fiction series based on Connecticut historical figure Caroline Ferriday. Over 50 people attended the evening program. Nine people purchased a signed book to benefit the Friends of the Library. *(Informative & Collaborative and Responsible & Sustainable)*
- Memorial School is lending greater support to the Library's 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program. Children who complete the program will now receive a signed letter of congratulations from the Principal and Assistant Principal of Memorial School. This letter complements the sustained efforts that families invest into reading and lifelong learning by completing 1000 Books and encourages families to get excited for their upcoming entry into preschool or kindergarten. *(Informative and Collaborative)*

Department Reports

Administration:

This section contains general updates and news about library administration.

- The Board of Finance's approved budget made no changes to the Library's department budget. The Town Council is now reviewing the budget.
- The Library has applied for the Everyone Learns WiFi Initiative, a program through the Connecticut Education Network (the Library's internet service provider) that offers a subsidized WiFi service for increased internet access. The program provides for Cisco Meraki access point(s) installation on the exterior of the building. The program subsidy covers the hardware, installation, licensing, and CEN bandwidth for one year. After one year, the hardware and remaining 4 years of licensing is donated to the town. A summary of this initiative is available at: <https://ctedunet.net/everyonelearnswifiinitiative/>.
- Five public access computers were ordered and received. LION plans to install them in mid-May. These computers will replace machines that are 6+ years old.
- New parking lot banners have been hung. The previous banners were 5+ years old, faded and featured the Library's previous logo. The new banners have the Library's current logo and feature the Library's value statement.

Children's Department:

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

- On April 5, the Library partnered with East Hampton Youth and Family Services to host two workshops about internet safety for children and families, hosted by Internet Safety Concepts LLC. One session was hosted specifically for children and young adults in grades 6+. The second session was offered for adult caregivers of children and youth of all ages. Both sessions focused on how to remain safe when web browsing and on social media, and how to recognize threats in a virtual space.
- Collaborations for the Summer Reading Program have been finalized. The Children's Department will be working with the Senior Center, Parks and Recreation, the Public Schools and local businesses:
 - The Senior Center will be providing volunteer readers for library story times.
 - Library staff will be circulating weekly book bundles for use at Parks and Recreation's Summer Camp.
 - Memorial and Center School will continue their annual Teacher Read Aloud Series, in which public school employees read favorite stories biweekly at the library.
 - In conjunction with the donation of a bicycle as a summer reading prize, the Children's and Young Adult departments will be partnering with Airline Cycles for a trail ride.
- Library program kits consistently "sell out" with a wait list. Due to this patron demand, Take and Makes for Little Learners (Ages 3-5) and Grades K-5 will continue into the summer. Additionally, Science Explorers, a biweekly science, technology, engineering and math kit, will extend into May.

- The Juvenile Non-Fiction section is being reviewed and refreshed for quality and currency. Several new titles in history, earth science and geography will be available for circulation by June.

Adult / Young Adult Department:

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

- Two East Hampton High School seniors have partnered with the Library for their capstone project. The students presented to their classmates a video with a welcome message from the Adult and Young Adult Services Librarian and an introduction to the benefits of a library card. Staff have already started receiving online applications for eBook library cards from the freshman classes. The high school library media specialist will pick up the cards to distribute to students.
- Both the teen and adult Take and Makes were ‘sold out’ this month. Since Take and Makes continue to be popular with both groups, the program will continue into summer.
- The Adult and Young Adult Services Librarian did 3 virtual classroom “visits” to talk about Library services. Some of the junior classes signed up for eBook library cards for their English class.
- The Young Adult Fiction section has been shifted to create room at the beginning of the collection for a “New” section. This will highlight the collection and help patrons with browsing.

Circulation and Technical Services Department:

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

- We have enabled the option for due date slips to be sent by email, as suggested in the customer service survey. Now upon checkout, patrons can have their due date emailed rather than printed.
- Staff have created and updated 75+ eBook library cards in collaboration with the Middle School and High School classes to capitalize on our eBook services.
- More Nintendo Switch games have been added to the collection of more than 20 games that are circulating regularly.

Strategic Plan Indicators of Success

Circulation

Borrowers *(Accessible and Inclusive)*

	+/- Last Month	April Borrowers	March Borrowers	February Borrowers
Adults (borrowing physical items)	-66	796	862	810
Children (borrowing physical items)	+18	158	140	90
Corporate (borrowing physical items)	+4	18	14	22
Staff (borrowing physical items)	-6	9	15	13
TOTAL	-50	981	1,031	935
Digital Borrowers	+31	399	368	389

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

	2021			2020	2019	2018
	April	March	February	April	April	April
Adult Collection	3,648	4,229	4,189	59	3,405	3,317
Children's Collection	3,212	3,657	2,789	97	1,473	1,694
Young Adult	258	205	155	5	100	133
SUBTOTAL	7,118	8,091	7,133	161	4,978	5,144
eBooks – RB Digital	0*	0*	0*	182	182	200
eBooks – Overdrive	1,036	1,000	909**	768	470	108
eBooks - Hoopla	554	497	562	683	258	n/a
SUBTOTAL	1,590	1,497	1,471	1,661	910	522
TOTAL	8,708	9,588	8,604	1,794***	5,888	5,302

*RB Digital has been discontinued.

**This number was incorrectly reported in the February Monthly Report.

***The Library was closed to the public because of COVID-19

Visits

COVID Re-Opening Statistics (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

	Average Number of People entering Library per day	Number of People entering without masks	Number of conflicts over mask policy	Number of Curbside Pickups
Week of 3/29	59	3	2	22
Week of 4/5	68	1	0	18
Week of 4/12	69	0	0	27
Week of 4/19	61	0	0	20
Week of 4/26	60	0	0	20

Door Counter (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

July	August	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
1,579	2,535	2,768	2,984	2,568	3,013	2,786	2,733	4,218			

Programs and Partners

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

	<i>Programs</i>			<i>Attendance</i>		
	<i>April</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>February</i>	<i>April</i>	<i>March</i>	<i>February</i>
Adult Events	4	4	5	93	53	33
Children's Events	24	22	25	448	322	512
Young Adult Events	7	2	3	96	5	18
Intergenerational	0	1	0		3,223	0
TOTAL	35	29	33	637	3,603	563

Promotion

Website *(Welcoming and Vibrant)*

	+/- last month	April	March	February
Users	-1,880	1,654	3,534	1,939
New Users	-1,805	1,440	3,245	1,695
Sessions	-2,635	2,819	5,454	3,370
Page Views	-7,806	9,168	16,974	10,942

Popular Pages: e-Book Cards, Hours and Contact Info, eBooks and eAudio, Museum Passes, Candy Land

Facebook *(Welcoming and Vibrant)*

	+/- last month	April	March	February
Likes	+8	1,941	1,933	1,897
Post Reach	-3,502	7,944	11,446	7,381
Post Engagement	-2,631	1,464	4,095	3,360

Donations and Fundraising

Donations

Organization	Donation	Restrictions
Friends of the Library	\$2,000	Summer Reading
A Patron	\$500	Unrestricted

Grants/Fundraising

Organization	Amount	Restrictions
CT State Library	\$17,145	See: https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/dld/ARPAgrants