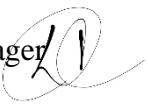


MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 
DATE: May 8, 2024
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 or agencies. The items are organized by department and are intended to provide information on activities currently being undertaken by the Town's departments and related entities and those matters that are upcoming. Not all departments will be represented in each Report.

Library

- The Library has added a new resource for patrons called Transparent Language. This database offers language-learning tracks for all ages in over 110 different languages, including American Sign Language, and is available for use on both desktop and mobile devices.
- The Library will be handing out East Hampton "Adventure Boxes" in anticipation of this year's Summer Reading program, which is themed "Adventure Begins at Your Library." Each box will contain fun surprises and a map with East Hampton locations for patrons to explore. Boxes will be handed out on a first-come, first-served basis beginning May 28 and patrons who complete their map can hand it in at the Library by June 15 to be entered into a grand prize drawing.
- The Library's month-long fee forgiveness program, "MAY we see your dog?" was featured in the Rivereast newspaper and on NBC Connecticut. This initiative was inspired by the Worcester Public Library's "March Meowness" program but forgives fees for lost or damaged items in exchange for dog photos instead of cat photos. Patrons have already begun to take advantage of the program to get their accounts in good standing and add their own dogs to the Library's community pet bulletin board.
- The Friends of the Library will be holding its annual Book Sale on May 31 and June 1. The Library will begin accepting donations of gently used books for the sale beginning May 18.
- The Monthly Library Report for April is included with this Report.

Police

- On Saturday, April 27, the Department, in partnership with the Town's Prevention Partnership and Prevention Coordinator, participated in the National Drug Take Back

Day sponsored by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). This year, 60 pounds of prescription medications were collected that were ultimately destroyed by the DEA. All residents are reminded that in addition to these special collection days, the Department maintains a prescription Drug Take Back box in the lobby of the Police Department and residents are welcome to dispose of prescription medications during normal business hours. Since 2018, the Department has collected 1,814.7 pounds of outdated and unneeded medication for proper disposal.

- On Thursday, May 23, Officer Steven Wawruck and K9 Heros will graduate from the 246th Connecticut State Police K9 Patrol Academy. The approximately 16-week academy covered topics such as obedience, searching and tracking, aggressive work, and evidence recovery. K9 Heros, when “off-duty,” will live with Officer Wawruck and his family.
- On Friday, May 31, Officer Mark Pekar will be retiring from the Department after 20 years of dedicated service to the town and its residents. A retirement celebration will be held on Thursday, May 30, in the Department's training room at 4:30 pm. All are invited to attend.
- During the month of April, the Department did not use Narcan, nor did it respond to any medical call in which a family member or other person had used it.

Public Works

- The Town's contractor, Southern Industries, has fully mobilized to the site of the Wopowog Culvert Replacement. They have installed all erosion controls and have removed all of the existing concrete headwalls and end walls as well as the damaged metal pipes. They have also installed the 60" HDPE pipe for stream bypass during construction. They are currently working on preparations for installation of cofferdams and sandbags for dewatering during construction. Once these measures are put in place and approved by the Town's engineer, they can begin excavation for the box culvert and installation of the base materials and the precast cutoff walls.
- The Town's new mowing contractor, A/Z Services, has begun mowing the Town's municipal facilities. The contractor will be mowing all municipal facilities once per week, cemeteries once every three weeks and some other specified areas as directed. Utilizing a contractor for these services will provide a higher level of service and provide cost savings to the Town.

- Public Works staff has begun spring maintenance activities. Pothole patching, asphalt curb repair and installation, roadside mowing, street sweeping, and gravel road maintenance are all concurrently underway. Within the next few weeks, portions of the crew will switch to drainage work in anticipation of paving work to be done in the late summer. Roads that are proposed to be paved are Barton Hill (Rt 66 to Oak Knoll), Forest Street, Hayes Road and East Hayes Road. Additionally, shimming work is planned for later this summer and fall for Waterhole Road and Sillimanville Road and Comstock Trail. This work is in preparation for chip sealing next spring.
- The grounds crew has been very busy with spring sports in full swing, and with mowing of the athletic fields and school grounds. The crew paints and maintains field markings for baseball/softball, track and field, flag football, spring soccer and bicycle club. It is worth noting that utilizing the contractor for mowing of the municipal grounds has allowed the Town crews to provide a higher level of service to the various athletic organizations and school sports and has allowed time for the crews to perform other much needed maintenance activities at the schools.
- Currently, the High School Tennis Courts are scheduled to have the acrylic playing surface applied by the end of May, weather permitting. It is imperative for proper application of the surface, that nighttime temperatures are continuously above 50 degrees. The asphalt paving portion of the warranty repair went well and according to the third party testing that was undertaken, high quality compaction and proper integration of the asphalt passes was achieved. As a reminder, this work was done as warranty work by the contractor due to premature cracking in the surface shortly after the original project was completed.

Recreation

- The Town has received a grant from the State of Connecticut DEEP in the amount of \$47,648 for the management of Hydrilla (an invasive plant species) that was found in Lake Pocotopaug. Staff is working with the Conservation and Lake Commission as well as consultant GZA to form a treatment plan to take place in the coming months.
- A successful Trail Cleanup Day was performed on Saturday, May 4 on the Air Line Trail. The drainage along the sides of the Trail between the Ledges and Bishops Cut were cleared out. Other debris was also removed from the Trail. Staff and the Air Line Trail Committee extend special thanks to the great group of volunteers that came out to support the event. The event saw participation from the Air Line Trail Committee members, East Hampton Fire Department, Middle School students completing a capstone project, as well as supporters from the general public.

- Residents and boaters are reminded that all boats and vehicles entering Sears Park must have a park pass. Vehicle passes are available at no charge for residents and boat passes are \$50 for the season. Each can be acquired at the Town Hall or the Library with proof of residency.
- The Seamster Park and Jeffrey Leith Memorial Scholarship Golf Tournament fundraiser is Thursday, May 16 at Blackledge Country Club. Staff is pleased to have a great group of sponsors and golfers for the event. Interested golfers may still register for the event until Tuesday, May 14, or until all spots are full. Contact the Recreation Department to register or visit the website at www.easthamptonrec.com.

Town Manager/Other

- Staff and the Town Council have received word from David Price, who was named by the Clean Energy Task Force as the Town's Sustainable CT contact person in accordance with the resolution adopted in April, that the Town has been registered with Sustainable CT. This is the first step toward Town recognition under the optional programs of Sustainable CT and initiates the Town's access to the organization's resources. The Clean Energy Task Force will be identifying a group of its members to serve as the Town's Sustainability Team in the early stages of East Hampton's participation.
- The Water System Committee continues to meet and has established the first Wednesday of each month as its regular meeting night. The next meeting will be June 5 beginning at 6pm in the Town Hall. The Committee is actively considering the target area for initial efforts at expanded municipal water services in the community as it focuses the design efforts. Additionally, with the expertise of some of the members, an additional review of a water source in the Pine Brook area may be reconsidered to supplement other known sources. Staff also indicated that some discussions had taken place with the Town of Portland regarding a regional approach to water and that this may also be pursued in the future for the benefit of both communities.
- The Brownfields Redevelopment Agency is completing the Phase I evaluations on the Village properties under the EPA and CT DECD grants that are in place. The Town Council will soon be asked to consider the next phase of work, which will include testing of the sites to identify the suspected hazards and contamination. The Council and residents will notice the grant required sign at 1 Watrous Street which acknowledges the federal and state support for the environmental evaluations and site reuse planning at 13 Summit Street, 1 and 13 Watrous Street and 3 Walnut Avenue.
- Staff and the consulting engineer have finalized the specifications and plans for the Village Center sidewalk and streetscape improvement project. Those plans will be transmitted to the State for its review and approval. Additionally, staff will be scheduling

a meeting for Village Center businesses and property owners and the public to discuss the plans and begin to review how construction will be undertaken. At this time, the schedule anticipates construction starting in late July and lasting about three months. Access to businesses in the area will be maintained throughout the project. As the Council will recall, the project includes replacement of sidewalks with reuse of the memorial bricks in the area, improvement of pedestrian facilities to shorten crosswalks and correct accessibility issues and improvement of outdoor spaces for the public.

DC

cc: Management Staff

March 2024

Monthly Report

At a glance:

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

- The FY 24/25 Library operating budget is in the final stages of the budget process and remains as proposed. Town Council is expected to vote on the budget in May.
- The Community Center siding replacement project has been delayed due to weather and is now expected to begin in early May.

Strategic Plan Actions Update

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

- The Library is running a fee forgiveness program during the month of May entitled, “MAY we see your dog?” This program was inspired by the Worcester Public Library’s “March Meowness” program, in which patrons received fee forgiveness for showing a library staff member a photo of their cat (or any cat), and which received national media attention. East Hampton’s program will follow a similar format but will instead forgive the fee for one lost or damaged item per patron in exchange for a dog photo. This initiative is an effort to bring back some of the estimated 300 patrons who may no longer be using the Library because they have fees on their account. It is being featured on NBC Connecticut and in the Rivereast newspaper. *(Accessible & Inclusive)*
- The Library participated in the Lions Club’s town-wide “Choose Kindness” initiative the week of April 15. Preschool age children participated in a kindness-themed storytime, our Teen Advisory Board members hid messages of kindness in more than 75 of our children’s books, and adults were able to select a kindness challenge card off of our bulletin board to complete on their own. The Library also raised almost \$70 for East Hampton’s CT Draft Horse Rescue with a fundraiser called “Pennies for Ponies,” in which patrons could donate their loose change to help support the organization. *(Informative & Collaborative)*
- Library staff have been busy preparing for the May 1 rollout of our newest database, Transparent Language. This language-learning software offers more than 120 languages, has learning tracks for all ages, and is available on both desktop and mobile devices. *(Accessible & Inclusive) (Informative & Collaborative)*
- The Library will be handing out Adventure Boxes beginning May 28 as a teaser for this year’s Summer Reading program, which is themed “Adventure Begins at Your Library.” Each box will contain fun surprises and a map with East Hampton locations for patrons to explore. Boxes will be handed out on a first-come, first-served basis beginning May 28 and patrons who complete

their map can hand it in at the Library by June 15 to be entered into a grand prize drawing. *(Welcoming & Vibrant) (Informative & Collaborative)*

- The Library participated in the statewide Passport to Connecticut Libraries program during the month of April. Staff handed out 54 passports to East Hampton patrons and stamped 183 passports for patrons of other participating libraries. *(Welcoming & Vibrant) (Informative & Collaborative)*

Department Reports

Administration:

This section contains general updates and news about Library administration.

- The Friends of the Library held their monthly meeting on April 1, during which they made plans for a community seek and find activity that will take place during the month of July in partnership with the Village Center Merchants group. The intention of the program is to raise awareness about their organization and generate new memberships.
- The Library Advisory Board held its monthly meeting on April 1. Ms. Cachuela provided the Board with a summary of the data collected from both the community survey and the focus groups conducted as part of the strategic planning process. The Board also welcomed a new member, Anne Loranger.
- The Strategic Planning team held a meeting on April 3 to create a first draft of the new plan. This document was submitted to the CLC Strategic Planning Cohort for review at their May 1 meeting and will be presented to the Library Advisory Board at their May 6 meeting. Feedback will be gathered from each review and a final draft incorporating that feedback is expected to be completed during the month of May.
- On April 10, Ms. Cachuela attended a continuing education session on Library Facilities Management. Based on the content of the webinar, work has been done to improve our physical spaces, including a cleanup of the rear parking area, replacement of several stained ceiling tiles, and a landscaping project near the front parking area.
- Ms. Cachuela attended an information session on the Connecticut State Library's Construction Grants on April 16 to learn more about project eligibility and the application process.
- On April 18, Ms. Cachuela attended the Arts and Culture Commission meeting, during which the Commission chose recipients for their 2024 Capstone and community grants and selected winners for their annual student art awards.
- Ms. Cachuela attended the LION Board of Directors meeting on April 23. The consortium is currently looking at adding two new resources for its members- OCLC's CapiraMobile app, which would allow each library to have its own app for their patrons, and LibraryIQ, a data analysis tool for libraries that allows for in-depth collection development and evaluation of services. Both of these tools would be available to East Hampton at a significant discount if adopted by the entire LION consortium.

- The artwork featured in the Library's Community Room has been updated to the works of local photographer R. J. Phil and features black and white scenes of East Hampton past and present.
- The Public Service Associate job description was updated to better reflect current responsibilities and to emphasize the job's focus on customer service and the requirement for technology skills. This change was approved by Town Council at their April 23 meeting.
- Part-time Public Service Associate Alanna Herrick has given her notice. Her last day will be June 25. The position has been posted through the town and to the Connecticut Library Consortium's "Jobs" page.
- Funding has been earmarked for the installation of a key fob entry system on the Library's exterior door, which will allow more after-hours community room access for local groups who need a meeting space. Installation of the key fob system will begin as soon as the necessary parts arrive. This new system changes the procedure for groups using the room after hours and therefore necessitates a change to the Meeting Room Policy. Ms. Cachuela will present the proposed changes to the Library Advisory Board at their May 6 meeting.
- Full-time Library staff attended the Connecticut Library Association's Annual Conference on April 29 and April 30 as an opportunity to network with other library professionals and take part in continuing education.

Children's Department:

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

- During the week of East Hampton Public Schools' April vacation, the Library held a movie night with support from the East Hampton Prevention Partnership, a ukelele class taught by musician Julie Stepanek where participants learned to play basic songs and chords, and a STEM activity presented by Cool-ology®.
- On April 26, Ms. Gibson's Memorial School preschool class took a field trip to visit the Library. Each child was issued a library card and was able to check out a book.
- The Library held another popular Book Bingo program on April 29. 24 children and their families played Bingo and won free books.

Adult / Young Adult Department:

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

- April is National Poetry Month and the Teen Space was filled with poetry-related activities, including book spine poetry and adding leaf-shaped poems to an actual tree. The 6th grade lunchtime book club facilitated by Ms. Blanda also participated in poetry activities throughout the month.
- Ms. Blanda and Mr. Bolton participated in a Wellness Day event at the High School. The event offered library card sign ups, information about upcoming events and offered prizes. About 150 students visited the table.

- The spring Music in the Library event welcomed a vocalist for the first time. Aaron Spearin performed about 18 songs ranging from Johnny Cash to Zach Bryan.
- The department has collaborated with the Senior Center to expand our Library Home Delivery program, which allows temporarily or permanently homebound patrons to receive curated collections of materials delivered to their residence. Previously, the service was mainly offered to Meals on Wheels participants, but the Library is now advertising it to the broader community.

Circulation and Technical Services Department:

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

- A Tech Helpers Orientation session was held for teens looking to volunteer their time to help assist patrons with technology, including navigating cell phones and downloading apps.
- The department has been busy cataloging and labeling this year’s Nutmeg Award-winning books, which are now available for check out.

Strategic Plan Indicators of Success

Circulation

Borrowers *(Accessible and Inclusive)*

	+/- Last Month	April	March	February
Adults (borrowing physical items)	+6	1,268	1,262	1,261
Children & Teen (borrowing physical items)	+1	259	258	232
SUBTOTAL		1,527	1520	1493
Overdrive	-23	268	291	336
Hoopla	+31	307	276	278
SUBTOTAL		575	567	614
TOTAL	+15	2,102	2,087	2,107

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

	2024	2024	2024	2023	2022	2021

	April	March	February	April	April	April
Adult Collection	3,226	3,171	3,016	2,911	3,117	3,648
Children's Collection	3,165	3,172	2,989	2,896	3,016	3,212
Young Adult	450	396	371	368	285	258
SUBTOTAL	6,841	6,739	6,376	6,175	6,418	7,118
eBooks – Overdrive	1,269	1,580	1,550	1,046	984	1,036
eBooks - Hoopla	890	801	783	621	580	554
SUBTOTAL	2,159	2,381	2,333	1,667	1,564	1,590
TOTAL	9,000	9,120	8,699	7,842	7,982	8,708

Visits

Door Counter (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
5,019	6,497	3,964*	4,639	4,122	4,829	4,654	4,583	4,865	5,067		

*New Door Counter for September

Programs and Partners

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

Onsite Programs				Participants		
	April 2024	April 2023	April 2022**	April 2024	April 2023	April 2022**
Adult	13	5		112	25	
Children's	21	20		516	371	
Young Adult	6	7		10	21	
Intergenerational	4	2		75	32	
SUBTOTAL	44	34		713	449	
Self-Directed Activities				Participants		
Adult	1	1		20	35	
Children's	6	5		361	253	
Young Adult	2	0		9	0	
Intergenerational	2	1		261	24	
SUBTOTAL	10	7		414	312	
Offsite Programs				Attendance		
Adult	0	1		0	5	
Children's	7	5		151	109	
Young Adult	3	0		166	0	
Intergenerational	0	0		0	0	

SUBTOTAL	10	6		317	114	
TOTAL	64	47		1,444	875	

**Program statistics for 2022 shown here include combined totals for in-person, self-directed and offsite. Specific stats for self-directed and offsite will be reported beginning in July, the first month those numbers are archived and available.

Promotion

Website (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

	+/- last month	April	March	February
Users	+81	1,591	1,510	3,164
Sessions	+85	2,898	2,813	3,161
Page Views	+248	4,088	3,840	5,105
Events Calendar	+250	2250	2,000	2,322

5 Most Popular Pages: Library Homepage, Museum Passes, Library Staff, Reserve a Meeting Room, Events

Social Media (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

	+/- last month	April	March	February
Facebook				
Reactions/Comments/Shares	-275	397	672	479
Page Reach	-4319	9,431	13,750***	16,088
New Followers	+27	41	14	19
Instagram				
Reactions/Comments/Shares	-50	260	310	309
Page Reach	-2569	576	3,145***	524
New Followers	+6	19	13	14

***Reflects paid ad for Strategic Planning survey