


## MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council  
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager   
DATE: September 24, 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.

### **Collector's Office**

- The Collector's Office will be mailing sewer use bills on September 29, and they will be available to view and pay online on October 1, 2021. The sewer rate for the 2021 billing cycle is \$520 per EDU and an additional \$200 for those that have a grinder pump maintained by the WPCA. Sewer use bills may be paid in two equal installments on October 1, 2021 and April 1, 2022.
- The Office is also preparing to mail Tax Collector's Demand Notices by October 1, 2021. These are the statutorily required and prescribed notices to those with delinquent bills reminding them of the delinquency and requesting payment. As a reminder the term "Demand" is prescribed by State Statute and is not meant to imply rudeness towards the taxpayer.
- Staff is also reviewing the roll of real property with delinquent taxes and sewer fees and preparing for a tax sale to collect funds of about \$1 million. The review focuses on those who have at least three years of delinquent payments (Grand Lists of 2020, 2019 and 2018) or other significant delinquencies like an amount due of over \$10,000 or multiple years of sewer fees. Payers in delinquency will receive the Demand notice and have until October 25 to pay. After that point, the accounts will be in the tax sale preparation process and will begin to incur additional fees. The sale itself would likely occur in early 2022, perhaps by about March.

### **Finance**

- Staff in the Finance Department is preparing the annual notice to taxpayers as requested by the Board of Finance. The notice provides individualized information on the distribution of taxes paid by each parcel for various purposes including Education, Administration and Finance, Debt, Public Safety, Public Works, Culture and Recreation, Capital Improvements and Transfers, Health and Human Services, and Building, Planning and Zoning.

### **Land Use**

- Staff continues to work with River COG to develop the regional Housing Plan, which will include an East Hampton section that will serve as the Town's required Housing Plan. The online

housing survey is still being conducted and interested parties can complete the form by [clicking here](#) or on the River COG's website: [www.rivercog.org](http://www.rivercog.org).

### **Library**

- Reviewing current and potential future needs and options. Developing plans for significant updates and rearrangements in the building to better utilize space.

### **Parks and Recreation**

- The Recreation Department has taken on administration of the Travel Basketball program as a Town program. Tryouts for this program finished up last week and teams are being formed. As a Recreation Department program, it will continue to provide development of basketball skills and growth for youth that want to play more basketball at a more competitive level. The season starts October 15.
- Fall programs are currently being organized which include Trunk or Treat, Youth Basketball, Paint nights and much more.
- Construction has started on the High School Athletic Facilities project and effective Monday, September 27, the tennis courts, baseball field and track will be closed until the work is complete. The 2021 portion of the project is expected to be complete by the end of October and some additional work will take place in spring 2022.
- The Department and the Conservation Lake Commission are working with the Bevin company, owner of the Lake Pocotopaug dam, to facilitate a significant lake drawdown for this winter. The goal is to bring the lake level down 30 inches below the top of the dam structure. Comparatively, a typical winter level would be around 20 inches. This year's drawdown is intended to help facilitate private repairs and replacements of sea walls and to assist in the Town project to replace the Sears Park Boat Launch. Publication of the planned drawdown begins with postings on Town/Department social media pages, a Department email blast and a notice to the community in next Friday's edition of the Rivereast newspaper. The drawdown is expected to begin on Tuesday, October 12.

### **Police**

- The Department's current recruitment process is moving forward, and the Department has received a total of 26 applications. The first round of oral boards is scheduled for September 29. Individuals passing the oral board will move onto the background investigation phase. If qualified candidates are not found in the first round of oral boards, the Department will invite some of the remaining applicants to an additional oral board. The goal is to have a qualified applicant hired by the end of December.

- Officer David Gionfriddo and Officer Caleb Cavanaugh were recognized by the Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) organization on September 15 at a Law Enforcement Recognition Ceremony, held at the Mohegan Sun Casino. Both officers were recognized for their efforts in removing drunk drivers from our roadways. Officer Gionfriddo is a multi-year recipient of this award. A great job by both officers.

### **Public Works**

- The Town's contractor, Frankson Fence, has begun repairing and replacing the guard rails along Lake Drive. This work had been delayed due to materials shortages. It is estimated that the work should be complete within two weeks.
- Work has resumed on the Edgerton Street Drainage project. All of the Catch basins on the north side of the road have been replaced. Crews have progressed on the south side of the road replacing all catch basins and corroded metal piping. All of the existing metal piping on the project has been found to be completely corroded with the bottoms of the pipes eroded away. Starting next week (9/27), an additional drainage crew will be assigned on the project as much as possible to assist with maintaining our time schedule.
- Several dead trees have been removed by the Town's tree contractor on Daly Road. This was one of the harder hit areas from the recent infestations of the gypsy moths and emerald ash borers. Significant progress has been made through Eversource's and the Town's efforts to eliminate dead and dying trees within the Town Rights of Way, though there is still a significant amount of work to be done.

### **Senior Center**

- The Senior Center continues to be busier with more drop-in traffic. This is a good sign as the Center has been active although not at the pre-pandemic levels.
- As National Senior Center month draws to a close, the Center offered 115 events throughout the month, including a Fall Prevention/T'ai Chi demonstration, Movie Day and Fall wreath making. Twenty-four participants went on a Tour Bus Trip to the Hudson River in partnership with the Colchester Senior Center.
- The Flu Clinic will be held at the Senior Center Thursday, October 7. People are asked to make an appointment for the clinic.
- Medicare Open Enrollment starts in October and runs through December. Staff offers Open Enrollment Benefits check-up by appointment during those months. Senior Resources and the Area Agency on Aging will be supporting the counselling, by offering Zoom interviews.

- Dawn Blizzard, intern from the Youth and Family Services Department, will be providing a mental health seminar to participants that may be feeling a bit over/underwhelmed by our world around us. The seminar is planned for September 30.

#### **WPCA**

- Construction on Colchester's sewer line on the Air Line Trail will commence soon and will take several weeks during the fall season. During the construction, it is expected that the Trail will remain passable most of the time, but some temporary closures may be required. During the project, some equipment and materials will be staged and stored at the Cranberry Bog parking area, which will reduce parking capacity for a time.

#### **Youth and Family Services**

- The Department is providing support to the schools as they are dealing with mental health issues arising from the pandemic and return to school. The Director and at least two of the Department's interns are providing counseling services to students either at the schools or in the Town Hall.

#### **Town Manager/Other**

- The Town's COVID rates remain at the "Red Alert" level under the State's framework. In the recent reporting, the Town was seeing an average of about 3 new cases each day or 22.9 cases per 100,000 population. All who are eligible are being encouraged to receive the COVID vaccine, which is available through Chatham Health District and other locations. Unfortunately, East Hampton's vaccination rate is trailing behind some other communities in our area and the State-wide rate. About 64% of the Town's residents are fully vaccinated.
- As the protocols for additional vaccination doses unfold, Chatham Health District has been and will be providing third dose and booster vaccinations as new people become eligible. Currently, the District is providing the additional vaccinations for persons who are immunocompromised. Also, as the Council is aware, masks are being required in the Town buildings and schools for all persons regardless of vaccination status. Residents and visitors to other business locations or at other gatherings are encouraged to wear masks in order to protect themselves and others.
- The River COG is exploring joint projects among the regional towns to take advantage of both ARPA funds as well as other potential funding sources. It is anticipated the COG will suggest that the member towns consider reserving some portion of their individual ARPA funds for joint projects. The COG is also collecting concepts for joint projects to be funded through other grant sources at both the State and Federal level.

DC

cc: Management Staff