


MEMORANDUM

TO: Town Council
FROM: David E. Cox, Town Manager 
DATE: September 8, 2023
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

- This year's Summer Reading Program ended with a total of 801 participants, which is a 12% increase from last year. A circus-themed Summer Reading Closing event was held on August 18 with 235 patrons in attendance.
- The Children's Room is now circulating Tonies, screen-free speakers that act as an easily controllable audiobook for young children. Tonie character figurines connect to the top of the speaker via magnets and contain a collection of songs and stories that relate to that character. This collection was generously funded by the Friends of the Library.
- Around the end of September, work will be undertaken to update the circulation desk area at the front of the Library. Work will include the replacement of the work surfaces and spaces and revision of electrical and data connections in an effort to improve the functionality of the area for both patrons and employees.
- The Library will host its first family movie night on September 18. The movie license was recently acquired through a partnership with the East Hampton Prevention Partnership.
- Children's Librarian Christine Cachuela was named Acting Director on August 28 and will serve in that capacity until a permanent Director is named.
- The Monthly Library Report for August is included in this Report.

Planning and Zoning

- Planning and Zoning Official Jeremy DeCarli has resigned his position with the Town. His last day in the office will be Thursday, September 14. While a new employee is being sought, services will be provided by a third party planner or planning firm on a contract basis. Once those details are known, they will be shared publicly.

Police Department

- On August 14, members of the Department, along with the BOE Armed Security Officers (ASO's), conducted Active Shooter Training at the Center School. It was a very productive and informative training session. The Department continues to train with the ASO's to enhance the overall security at the schools. Another joint training session will be scheduled in the future.
- The Department is continuing to work through ongoing difficulties with vehicle ordering. The manufacturer is experiencing long lead times for vehicle delivery and, at times, is canceling orders due to its diminished capacity to produce the police vehicles being requested. Currently, Ford has indicated that vehicle orders they may take this fall will not be produced and delivered until 2025. This situation, which often extends to vehicle parts as well, is making planning for vehicle replacements very difficult. Staff is discussing various ways to respond to the situation in order to ensure that the fleet is in good shape and reliable.
- During the month of August, the Department responded to one drug overdose involving a 52 year old female. One dose of Narcan was administered by the responding officers. Fortunately, the person survived.

Recreation

- Fall programs and after-school programs are up and running. Staff is preparing for two large events; the annual Trunk or Treat and the Air Line Trail Ghost Run. Information and registrations for these events will be on the Department's website soon so that interested parties may begin to register.
- The Recreation Department has been working closely with Public Works to ensure a smooth transition of the maintenance responsibilities for parks and grounds. Fall sports have begun on many of the Town's fields and staff is working together to ensure that all Town, school, and outside organizations have fields and facilities that are in the best shape possible.
- Lake water testing has begun through the Town's new Limnologist consultant, GZA GeoEnvironmental, Inc. Staff and the Conservation Lake Commission are looking forward to this new partnership and the potential benefits to the water quality of Lake Pocotopaug.

Senior Center

- The Senior Center is celebrating Senior Center Month this September with a variety of events, activities and trips.
- The Center has finalized its order for a new transportation bus, which is 100% grant funded and is expected to be delivered in the spring of 2024. The transportation services of the Center continue using the Town's existing bus and efforts continue toward coordinating with public transportation services to expand the reach of the Town's efforts.

WPCA/Joint Facilities

- The WPCA held a public hearing regarding proposed sewer service rates for the upcoming year beginning October 1, 2023. No member of the public spoke at the hearing held on Tuesday, September 5. The WPCA determined to increase the annual rate for sewer service to \$560 per unit (household). The previous rate was \$520 and has been at that level since 2021. The 7.7% increase equates to an annualized increase of 3.85%. Additionally, the annual rate for individual household grinder pumps managed by the WPCA was increased to \$350 from \$250. Customers on the sewer system will receive bills around October 1, which are due by the end of that month. Customers may pay the bill in full or in two equal installments.

Town Manager/Other

- The Brownfields Redevelopment Agency has prepared a Request for Qualifications for consulting services related to evaluating and planning remediation and reuse of 13 Summit, 1 Watrous, 13 Watrous and 3 Walnut, which is being funded by a US EPA assessment grant in the amount of \$500,000 and a Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development Brownfields grant in the amount of \$200,000. The RFQ document has been sent to the granting agencies for approval prior to being advertised. It is anticipated that a final recommendation for a consultant will be presented to the Council in January.
- Additionally, a portion of the building at 13 Summit Avenue is beginning to collapse. This section (northeast side) was damaged by fire in the past and has been in decline since. Town staff are working with a local contractor to take steps to remove that portion of the building while being sensitive to the potential environmental hazards.
- In follow up to the Workshop meeting of the Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission, staff is investigating and preparing amendments to the Town Code and the Subdivision Regulations that will discourage or eliminate the development of new private roads in the Town. The first changes may be in the Town's street specifications and the Town Code to clarify language around private roads related to ensuring that they are built to Town standards and to address potential inspection by the Town as well as requirements for repair and appropriate financial requirements. Additionally, the Planning and Zoning Commission will be asked to consider amendments to the subdivision regulations to eliminate or significantly restrict the development of private roads and to possibly require establishment of homeowner associations and other mechanisms to oversee any private road that may be established with permission. The Town Council is expected to see proposed regulation changes at the last meeting in September.
- Visitors to the Town Hall will see an Old Home Days Quilt hanging in front lobby. The quilt was made by Delores Morgano using t-shirts from recent Old Home Days and was made for the event's 2023 raffle. The raffle winner, Pam Joslyn, loaned the quilt to the Town to be displayed.

DC

cc: Management Staff

August 2023

Monthly Report

At a glance:

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

- This year's Summer Reading Program ended with a total of 801 participants, a 12% increase from last year. A circus-themed Summer Reading Closing event was held on August 18 and featured special guests Circus Moves, a company that teaches participants skills like walking a tight rope, juggling, and plate spinning. 235 patrons attended.
- The state's required Summer Reading patron survey had 119 responses this year. 98% of patrons who took the survey said they felt welcome in the Library and 91% said that they plan to participate in upcoming Library programs. Written responses overwhelmingly named Library staff, the variety of programs available, and new initiatives like the Library of Things as reasons why they love their Library.

Strategic Plan Actions Update

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

- The Children's Room is now circulating Tonies, screen-free speakers that act as an easily controllable audiobook for young children. Tonie character figurines connect to the top of the speaker via magnets and contain a collection of songs and stories that relate to that character. This collection was generously funded by the Friends of the Library, and all three Tonieboxes were checked out within their first 24 hours of being available. *(Informative & Collaborative), (Responsible & Sustainable)*
- The Library has acquired two new wireless hotspots to circulate. *(Accessible & Inclusive)*
- The anticipated time frame for the delivery of the new circulation desk is the last week of September. *(Welcoming & Vibrant)*
- The Library will host its first family movie night on September 18. A movie license was recently acquired through a partnership with the East Hampton Prevention Partnership. *(Informative & Collaborative)*

Department Reports

Administration:

This section contains general updates and news about Library administration.

- Children's Librarian Christine Cachuela was named Acting Director on August 28.
- Ms. Cachuela attended the LION Board meeting on August 29.

- The Friends of the Library held their monthly meeting on August 7, during which they approved funding for the Library's new circulating collection of Tonies and for an Adult music program in December. They also began planning for a Mahjong tournament as a spring fundraiser.
- The Library Advisory Board did not hold an August meeting.

Children's Department:

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

- 428 children participated in this year's Summer Reading Program. This number includes the 28 children from Belltown Discovery Center, who collaborated with the Library to hold their own in-house program. Ms. Cachuela visited the daycare center on August 22 to pass out their prizes- a free book for each child (selected based on their individual interests) and a small goodie bag of candy and toys.
- 279 children participated in this year's Summer Reading interactive board game.
- A new music and movement based storytime program called Bubbles and Beats will debut on September 11. Popular programs like STEMtastic, DIY Days, and Kids Comic Creators will also return this fall.
- Preschool outreach visits will continue monthly this school year, beginning in October.

Adult / Young Adult Department:

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

- Adult programming was well-attended in August, including a lecture on the popular book *Lessons in Chemistry*. An art program with a focus on mindfulness filled to capacity within 24 hours of registration opening.
- A generous donation from the Lions Club was used to replace worn out copies of classics and other popular titles. The new books are available for checkout.
- Teen Advisory Board kicked off with a pizza party. The group will focus this year on teen programming and collection development.

Circulation and Technical Services Department:

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

- A purchase order for a new overhead door counter was approved. The device will provide the Library with a more accurate count of regular patron traffic, as well as for attendance at large-scale events. It has been installed and is ready for use.
- Circulation continued to rise in August, with over 10,000 items checked out during the month.

Strategic Plan Indicators of Success

Circulation

Borrowers *(Accessible and Inclusive)*

	+/- Last Month	August Borrowers	July Borrowers	June Borrowers
Adults (borrowing physical items)	+15	1283	1,268	1,253
Children (borrowing physical items)	+26	405	379	361
Corporate (borrowing physical items)	-1	12	13	11
Staff (borrowing physical items)	0	17	17	18
SUBTOTAL		1717	1,677	1,643
Overdrive	+34	259	225	225
Hoopla	+22	262	240	236
SUBTOTAL		521	465	461
TOTAL		2,238	2,142	2,104

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

	2023	2023	2023	2022	2021	2020
	August	July	June	August	August	August
Adult Collection	3739	3241	3280	3,802	3,877	3,807
Children's Collection	4015	4070	4068	3,869	3,880	2,549
Young Adult	623	592	613	492	376	189
SUBTOTAL	8377	7903	7,967	8,163	8,133	6,545
eBooks – Overdrive	1008	983	1,070	981	990	781
eBooks - Hoopla	797	617	661	686	656	487
eBooks – RB Digital*	0*	0*	0*	0*	0*	0*
SUBTOTAL	1805	1,600	1,731	1,667	1,646	1,268
TOTAL	10,186	9,503	9,698	9,830	9,779	7,813

*RB Digital was discontinued.

Visits

Door Counter (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June
5,019	6,497										

Programs and Partners

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

<i>Onsite Programs</i>				<i>Participants</i>		
	<i>August</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>June</i>	<i>August</i>	<i>July</i>	<i>June</i>
Adult	5	5	6	52	35	74
Children's	13	17	10	224	327	242
Young Adult	3	4	2	15	24	5
Intergenerational	1	0	2	235	0	592
SUBTOTAL	22	26	20	526	386	913
<i>Self-Directed Activities</i>				<i>Participants</i>		
Adult	3	2	1	142	57	20
Children's	6	4	5	749	283	313
Young Adult	3	3	1	140	23	7
Intergenerational	5	3	1	162	257	50
SUBTOTAL	17	12	8	1193	620	390
<i>Offsite Programs</i>				<i>Attendance</i>		
Adult	0	0	0	0	0	0
Children's	5	5	4	111	95	340
Young Adult	0	0	2	0	0	530
Intergenerational	1	0	1	150	0	47
SUBTOTAL	6	5	6	261	95	917
TOTAL	45	43	34	1980	1101	2220

Promotion

Website (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

	+/- last month	August	July	June
Users	+29	1904	1875	2115
Sessions	+271	3413	3142	3710
Page Views	+105	4839	4734	5697
Events Calendar	+354	1491	1137	2319

5 Most Popular Pages: Library Homepage, Hours & Contact Info, Library Staff, Reserve a Meeting Room, Museum Passes.

Social Media (*Welcoming and Vibrant*)

	+/- last month	August	July	June
Facebook				
Reactions/Comments/Shares	+1463	4774	3311	3514
Page Reach	+659	5321	4662	3543
New Followers	+0	23	23	17
Instagram				
Reactions/Comments/Shares/Views	-983	4386	5369	4351
Page Reach	-573	581	1154	534
New Followers	-8	14	22	17