

MEMO

To: Town Council
CC: Town Employees
From: John C. Carrington, Interim Town Manager
Date: March 23, 2020
Subject: **Town Manager's Report**

Below, please find my report concerning various items of interest to the Town Council, staff, and the community:

Council Business

- *Proposed FY 2020/21 Operating Budget and CIP* –Residents can find a schedule of budget meetings on the Town's website and can access information regarding the current year budget and next year's proposed budget on our *Open Mansfield* financial transparency platform: <http://open.mansfieldct.org>.

Departmental Reports

- ***Board of Education:***
 - Mansfield Public Schools sent students home on Friday, March 6 with two weeks' worth of supplemental learning materials. At the time, elementary teachers personally reached out to all families to check in, discuss the supplemental learning materials, and survey parents on technology needs should a longer shut down be needed. MMS families were contacted via email. Along with the above, contact information was confirmed. Also, using the information gathered, we have been providing families with Chromebook computers.
 - Beginning Monday, March 16, Mansfield Food Services began distribution of breakfast and lunch to all interested families. The program does not require a minimum income level and is open to any child under the age of 18. Distribution is occurring three times a week at five locations including some neighborhood locations to support those families without transportation. Each distribution includes enough breakfast and lunch meals until the next distribution. More than 70 families have participated with numbers going up with each distribution.
 - We have 8 Little Lending Libraries around town. These were created in the past few summers by middle school students. They have been fully stocked with books so that children may continue to have access to reading material during the shutdown.
 - Beginning next week, we will move from supplemental learning to School at Home. Parents will be asked to support their children daily with learning tasks provided by teachers through electronic means. We continue to deploy electronic devices (Chromebooks) to all families who have requested them. For some of our youngest learners, we will create packets of materials that can be picked up by families as needed.
 - Our buildings have been thoroughly cleaned and we are beginning summer cleaning and maintenance tasks that can be done while still maintaining appropriate social distancing.

- As of the time of this report, it is unclear how long schools will be closed. We have many supports in place to conduct School at Home for as long as necessary including ways to support our children with special needs, ways to allow staff to continue to collaborate, and strategies for continuing to advance learning. We will continue to develop our program as needed for the length of this shutdown.
- **Building & Housing:**
 - We continue to provide housing inspection services but have had an increased volume of customers asking to postpone. I have advised staff to approve these requests and clearly document the reason and update our schedule so we return at a later date. This will have a negative effect on revenue in the short term. We may also need to consider overtime in the future to maintain our implementation schedule as required by ordinance.
 - Building code enforcement function remains status quo but I do expect a drop in activity due to financial consideration again with a negative revenue effect.
 - We are in the planning stage of perhaps splitting staff to maintain some level of service while limiting staffs contact with others.
 - We will assist other departments if needed as assigned by the Town Manager.
- **Downtown Partnership:**

The Mansfield Downtown Partnership is working to assist businesses throughout town in a variety of ways as they navigate the global COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts to date include:

 - Near-daily email updates to businesses with announcements, news, and information about local and state response efforts
 - Created and maintaining a Business Resource Center with information about funding opportunities, employee assistance, and more: mansfieldmdp.org/coronavirus/resourcecenter
 - Created and maintaining a list of all restaurants in town that are open and offering take-out, curbside pick-up, and/or delivery: downtownstorrs.org/dine/togo
 - Outreach to major commercial property owners to update them on the local response and to keep informed of their plans and responses
- **Eastern Highland Health District:**

(See Attached)
- **Facilities:**

The department has been cleaning/disinfecting all rooms from a five foot reach down at all buildings. This is complete at 95% of our buildings. We continue to clean after people vacate and keep up with disinfecting. Maintenance crew is working on their normal repairs as well as some small projects they can take advantage of as the buildings are vacant.
- **Finance:**
 - In order to increase ability to work remotely, we have made changes to our accounts payable and payroll processing, allowing for electronic submission of invoices and timesheets
 - Those who can, are working remotely when possible or using leave time if they chose not to come in
 - All staff working remotely have voicemail going to email to allow public to reach us
 - Public offices (Assessor's and Collector's offices) are updating webpages with any pertinent information
 - Advised a discretionary spending freeze until we know what the financial impact is going to be on revenues (interest income, charge for services)

- Continue to work on the Proposed Budget for FY 2020/21 and how we will present to the Town Council
- **Fire & Emergency Services:**
 - Number one priority is to be able to respond to 911 emergencies and keep our personnel safe.
 - Updates to personnel on latest protocols for PPE.
 - Keep personnel up to date on latest information for operational effectiveness.
 - Supporting Emergency Management & Fire Marshal Staff.
 - We have modified responses to limit exposure to personnel.
 - Have designated one of our ambulances as the primary response vehicle for any sick person type calls.
 - Restricted access to all fire stations to on duty staff and those actively responding to emergencies.
 - Having regular communications/updates with leadership (remotely)
 - Suspended any group training or meetings.
 - Developing plans for possible staffing models, schedule changes.
 - Developing plans for temporary housing to isolate staff if needed.
 - Coordinating and communicating with local departments and statewide resources.
 - Daily conference calls with local/county/state Fire & EMS
 - Continuous monitoring of Email and phone.
 - Monitoring and requesting essential EMS supplies and PPE through Region 4 EM.
 - Providing information and support to personnel and their families.
- **Human Resources:**
 - Recruiting – any interviews mostly for the Community Center summer hires will be conducted via the phone.
Recreation Coordinator currently scheduled to start on April 6.
Impact on the hiring for both the Town Manager and Director of Finance positions
 - Payroll – memo sent to employees (3/16) regarding recommending signing up for direct deposit, manual paychecks/paystubs to be mailed starting with 4/1 pay date, and timesheet to be submitted electronically with the pay period ending 3/27.
 - Unemployment Compensation – notified Department Heads regarding part-time employee's ability to register for unemployment compensation with the CTDOL. Provided website address, the Town's registration number and two documents for reference.
 - Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – sent memo to Town employees, Eastern Health District employees and Downtown Partnership employees regarding EAP that is offered through United Services and contact information and website.
 - Anthem – John Carrington, Jill Krieger, Kelly Lyman and Cherie Trahan approved waiving co-pays for Telehealth, Testing and Care Benefits for employees and their family members who are enrolled in our benefit plans that is associated with COVID- 19.
- **Human Services:**
 - Food:**
 - Staff are delivering Meals on Wheels to current recipients. We are moving to a 2x weekly drop of frozen meals verses daily delivery with follow-up wellness check-ins via telephone when indicated
 - Staff are doing a weekly drop of meals for individuals who attend the regular congregate site or have requested this service

- We are also keeping an active list of home delivery options for prepared meals and grocery items
- Our food pantry is stocked with non-perishable items that can be picked up or delivered if necessary. We have seen an increase in requests but have been able to meet the needs. We are following proper safe handling of the donations and are distributing following protocols that allow social distancing
- We are using donations to our account to purchase items as needed and will continue to do so.
- FOODSHARE happens every other week at Wrights Village/Senior Center and anyone who self-identifies as food insecure can come to pick up items. The next scheduled FOODSHARE distribution is Thursday, March 26th and we will follow the new protocol that has been established.
- TEFAP is a federally funded food program which is income based. We are a site for monthly distribution which we will continue to offer with the new protocol that has been established
- We are in contact with local/faith based food programs and make referrals as well as share information. * this is subject to change based on individual agency/organizational policies

Transportation:

- Dial-A-Ride and Public Transportation are still running at this time and available to all ages. * This is subject to change based on WRTD and DOT policies.
- Currently our staff is providing transportation to medical appointments on a very limited basis. We are screening via telephone the level of necessity and alternative resources. We will not transport anyone with active symptom of COVID-19. We are also not providing assistive transportation for anyone who requires staff physical assistance or accompany service to the appointment.

Mental Health (all ages):

- We are offering crisis intervention, wellness checkups, resource coordination, referral and brief treatment via phone, through e-mail and technology resources available to us.

As this is an evolving situation, we are making every effort to be in contact with other colleagues, service providers and the community at large as well as our state and national partners to look at creative ways to offer support and services while keeping our workforce safe.

- **Information Technology:**

The IT Department has been very active providing technology solutions and support. Most notably:

- Remote access for Municipal and School staff to work from home or alternative offices in support of social distancing.
- Conference call support and virtual meetings (i.e. go-to-meeting, etc.) for staff collaboration, meetings, services, etc.
- Planning & Development, Town Council, and Board of Education elected officials have all conducted phone-in meetings and we are continuing to expand this solution set.
- Supporting the schools in preparing for school-at-home.
- Collaboration with Town Manager's Office on the <https://mansfieldct.gov/covid-19> homepage as well as other Department's communications efforts.
- Managing technology expenses by leveraging special offers from regional groups and vendors during the COVID-19 situation.
- Rapid technology technical support as Departments and Buildings adjust their work and services (IT Staff are very active and focused on getting solutions and support to users).

- **Library:**
 - Staff is working on a rotation which limits their interaction with other staff.
 - Library staff has extended due dates for all materials to May 18 and renewed expired cards until the end of June. We will continue to push the dates out as necessary. All book returns are closed. We are asking people to hold on to their items for the time being.
 - Online circulation has nearly doubled over the past week. We are purchasing to meet demand.
 - We are answering questions/requests via email, concentrating on processing the many requests for library cards online, and doing our best to remove all barriers to access to our online resources. Using social media to inform the public about library services, and about other resources and timely information. We are also promoting WiFi access outside the building.

- **Parks & Recreation:**
 - Parks remain open and visitors are welcome to utilize the parks and playgrounds but all are required to practice social distancing. See website for more information on social distancing.
 - Staff continue to post online exercise classes and other activities that residents can do from home. Go to the website, www.mansfieldcc.com and Facebook page, www.facebook.com/mansfieldcommunitycenter/ for details.
 - All Parks and Recreation facilities, Community Center, Lenard Hall and park buildings are closed until April 30.
 - All independently run spring youth sports programs, Little League, Mansfield Lacrosse, WAM United soccer and NEU Soccer are ordered per the Governor's executive orders to be shut down through April 30.

- **Planning and Development:**
 - **Remote Work.** All staff are primarily working from home at this time and limiting time in Town Hall. Members of the public are encouraged to submit requests for assistance via email at planzonedept@mansfieldct.org. Anyone calling the office should leave a voicemail when prompted; staff will return those calls as soon as possible.
 - **Land Use Boards and Commissions (PZC, IWA, ZBA, HDC).** Staff is working with the Town Attorney to update application procedures, meeting procedures and public hearing schedules based on Governor Lamont's Executive Order 71. Information on revised procedures and meeting schedules will be posted on the Department webpage when completed.
 - **Advisory Commissions and Committees (EDC, Conservation Commission, Parks and Natural Resources, Agriculture).** All advisory committee meetings have been deemed non-essential and cancelled for the time being as staff works on optimizing a virtual meeting format. Staff will work with Commission and Committee chairs to schedule virtual meetings as needed if there are time sensitive items that need to be addressed.
 - **Zoning Permits.** Zoning permits continue to be accepted on-line at <http://mansfield.onlinegovt.com/> and processed. Applicants should expect that the review timeframe may be longer than normal given limited access to paper files and potential capacity issues at departments/agencies that must approve the application before a permit can be issued.
 - **Inland Wetlands Permits.** Applications for Inland Wetlands Permits continue to be accepted on-line at <http://mansfield.onlinegovt.com/>. Applications for administrative approval continue to be processed; however, applicants should expect that the review timeframe may be longer than normal given limited access to paper files. Review of applications requiring Agency approval will be delayed pursuant to Governor Lamont's Executive Order 71.

- **Community Development Activities.** The public hearing on the Town's 2020 application to the Small Cities Community Development Block Grant program is being continued to April 13, 2020 to allow time for staff to determine whether we can meet HUD virtual meeting requirements.

- **Public Works:**

Based upon the Governor's Executive order and DECD guidance for essential employees, Public Works falls under several of these categories including:

- ✓ 3) Infrastructure, wastewater operations, transportation infrastructure (keep roads clear)
- ✓ 9) Construction, planning, engineering and design
- ✓ 10) Services necessary to maintain safety, sanitation and essential operations including landscaping services, outdoor maintenance, trash (Transfer Station)

The Public Works Department is administering social distancing, by using small teams of 1, 2 or 3, assigning vehicles to specific people, altering start times of teams and will continue advising individuals that if you are unwell to stay home. This week we will tally up trash and bulky waste and then invoice the individual to minimize touch points and increase social distancing.

- Since our Arborist Crew Leader started on October 15th, he and his crew have removed **312 trees**, which includes 58 trees over 85 feet that a contractor removed.

- **Resident Troopers:**

- The Resident State Troopers in the Town of Mansfield will exercise discretion, compassion, and common sense in enforcing the Governor's latest executive order. The following is a list of several steps we have taken so far and I am consistently monitoring changes with the Governor's office and my department to be able to update you with the most current measures my department is taking to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Helping to enforce any additional measures placed into effect in an effort to flatten the spread of COVID19.
- The Resident State Troopers office administrative worker was ordered to work remotely from home beginning Friday, March 20th until further notice.
- With the Town Hall being closed for business, the Mansfield Resident Troopers office is currently **NOT** allowing visitors to enter the Resident Troopers office. However, if someone gains entry to the Town Hall and visits the office, they are instructed to call 9-1-1 if it is an emergency or contact Troop C by telephone to initiate their complaint.
- All Resident Troopers have been advised to not conduct pro-active motor vehicle enforcement at this time.
- All Spring overtime shifts (UConn patrols along with DUI grant patrols) have been cancelled until further notice.
- The Resident Troopers are currently still responding to all citizen complaints as usual, however taking common sense pre-cautions adhering to the "social distancing" standards whenever possible.
- Resident Troopers are currently being advised to utilize PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) for suspected cases of COVID-19 before entering the scene.
- The Mansfield Resident Troopers will continue to lead by example and be a calming influence to all those around us. We recognize that many people will still need to travel the roadways in order to serve in critical support functions around the Town of Mansfield and the State.
- The Mansfield Resident Troopers will continue to be a visible and reassuring presence in the Town of Mansfield.



Eastern Highlands Health District

4 South Eagleville Road • Mansfield CT 06268 • Tel: (860) 429-3325 • Fax: (860) 429-3321 • Web: www.EHHD.org

Eastern Highlands Health Districts COVID-19 Response Activity Report, March 23 2020

The following are highlights from this week's DPH state-wide conference call with local health directors and EMD's:

- Tracking international travelers by local health departments has ceased.
- DPH provided local health department guidance on contact tracing. DPH informed us they are only investigating hospitalized cases. DPH further informed us that in a short-time effective contact tracing will not be feasible. There is sustained community spread in Connecticut. Assume that anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 is infected.
- Testing in the state continues to ramp up. There are a number of hospitals around the state that have set up drive thru clinics, with more planned in the near future. The closest ones to us are Backus Hospital, Manchester Hospital, and Johnson Memorial. The last information I have regarding Windham Hospital is they're working on it. These testing sites are available to anyone with a doctor's order.
- DPH clarified that local and state law enforcement is the lead regarding enforcement of Governor's Executive Orders.

EHHD Current Activities and Announcements:

- *See the attached summary report from the DPH for the latest case count for the state of Connecticut. These numbers represent sustained community spread and are a fraction of the actual number in the community.*
- *We now have 7 positive cases of COVID-19 within the Eastern Highlands Health District. Of these 1 is in a Mansfield resident.*
- *The appropriate contact tracing of confirmed cases is underway.*
- *We are notifying area PSAP's of location of confirmed cases.*
- We have fully activated our emergency public health and pandemic response plan. Staff assignments have been adjusted accordingly. We recognize that some towns are in the process of activating their Emergency Operations Center. To facilitate EHHD's role in your EOC as an Emergency Support Function-8 (Public Health/Medical Services) resource, we can participate virtually from our main office via phone/email.
- We are coordinating with Region 4 ESF 8 on the public health regional response to COVID-19.
- The EHHD is activating our Medical Reserve Corps Unit in Coordination with Region 4 and DPH.
- We continue to actively recruit new members of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC). PLEASE PASS THE WORD. Go to www.ehhd.org to join.
- Field staff visited all multi-chair (high risk) cosmetology establishments ensure their closure.
- We drafted and distributed instructions to all Food Establishments that are still open to eliminate all common touch points, and self-serve, ready to eat foods. Field staff followed up with site visits to ensure compliance.



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- Ongoing coordination with UConn Student Health and Wellness regarding their efforts to contain and mitigate disease spread on campus, and among the remaining student population.
- We developed and distributed infection control and social distancing guidance to those daycares that remain open.
- We developed and distributed ill worker and ill worker close contact guidance for the towns and other employers.
- We developed and distributed guidance for food distribution sites.
- We developed and distributed self-protection information to our senior center and senior program contacts for those at higher risk.
- We continue to update our local area healthcare providers with the latest information on evaluation, testing, and transmission control.
- Website updated daily
- We continue to participate in weekly CDC and semi-weekly DPH conference call for local health departments.
- We assist and facilitate with implementation and interpretation of Governors executive orders where appropriate.

The above are salient activities and not a complete and comprehensive list of all EHHD activities during the COVID-19 Response period.

MEMO

To: John Carrington, Interim Town Manager
CC: Town Council
From: Sara-Ann Chaine, Town Clerk
Date: March 23, 2020
Subject: **Town Clerk's Office COVID-19 Operations Plan**

Objectives

1. Protect the physical and mental health of staff
2. Protect those in the high risk category and support public health
3. Provide essential services

I have been closely watching the progressively strict public safety measures being recommended by health professionals and being ordered by the Governor as well as the development of protocols being put into place by other Town Clerks across the state. Although the Governor has ordered a shutdown, this does not apply to municipalities due to the essential functions these entities perform.

Speaking of Town Clerks specifically, many of the functions our staff perform are small but integral parts of larger pictures with important economic and legal implications. We do not take this responsibility lightly. The following operations plan ensures we continue to provide essential services while simultaneously protecting the physical and mental health of our staff as well as protecting those in the high risk category from contact with the virus.

I greatly appreciate your support and assure you that we will make every effort to assist each customer creatively while protecting ourselves and the public.

Office Staffing

Town Clerk's Office staff will be in the office performing essential functions daily. Staff has the option to stagger shifts so that only one staff member will be present at a time. Staff who are not in the office will perform related work at home or use personal time. The Town Clerk will host two virtual meetings a day – one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The purpose of the meetings will be for staff to keep each other updated on office operations and discuss projects.

Face-to-Face Customer Interactions

Effective immediately, all non-urgent/non-emergency face-to-face (F2F) customer interactions will be discontinued. Urgent/emergency F2F customer needs will be handled by appointment, at the external door to the Town Hall, and must meet the following criteria:

- Funeral director/employee needing to file a death certificate, get certified copies, and/or a burial or cremation certificate
- Notarization for business application for relief funds or emergency travel authorization for a minor (I will waive the fee for both due to the circumstances)
- Request to obtain a marriage license

Should we determine that any other kind of F2F customer need is an emergency, we will accommodate that need using the F2F protocol outlined above.

Land Records

Land records are temporarily available online for free. If someone needs records that are not yet online, we will find a way to provide the records to them whether through the mail or at the main door to the building. There will be no public access to our vault at this time. See our webpage for more information about accessing the land records online for free. www.MansfieldCT.gov/TownClerk

Other Essential Functions & Non-Essential Functions

These functions will continue to be performed in the office by staff and the US postal system will be used in place of F2F exchanges:

- Recording land records
- Certifying and printing archival copies of births
- Taking in and processing routine vital records
- Sending death reports with archival copies to the state
- Returning original land records once recorded
- Checking Cott land record verification reports
- Submitting monthly State reports
- Processing and submitting conveyance tax forms
- Absentee ballot applications, ballot issuing, ballot returns
- Dog licenses
- Hunting and fishing licenses

Phone Calls

For the time being, there will be a staff member in the office during most normal business hours. Phone calls will be answered and voice mails will be returned. Should the need arise for an increase in remote work, phone calls will be forwarded to a staff member during town hall business hours if there is not someone in the office, we will work out a schedule for phone coverage, and we will check the main and our individual voicemails regularly.

Emails

Emails will be checked and responded to regularly whether in-office or working remotely.

Internal Mailroom Closure

As many people do, staff has high-risk category people at home that we are concerned about as the virus crisis unfolds. With this in mind, we are closing access to the mailroom to further limit F2F interactions. Mail will be available for pick up and drop off in the hallway immediately outside the Town Clerk's Office and will continue to be processed daily at this time. During this time, we will process all outgoing mail including certified mail. If there are questions or special considerations we need to know about, please call us.

Disinfecting/Protecting

Staff will disinfect all common surfaces touched by staff working in or visiting the Town Clerk's Office upon the start of their office shift and after any F2F customer interaction. Additionally, staff will follow public health guidelines regarding wearing gloves, washing hands, etc.

- **Town Clerk:**
(See Attached)

- **Windham Region Transit District:**

The Hunting Lodge line was on pause last week for UConn's spring break, but it does look like they are starting up that route again, but on Friday schedule so the stops are limited. Willimantic/Mansfield bus is still running the same schedule. WRTD buses are being disinfected on a daily basis, riders must board the bus from the back and drivers are not accepting cash.

Upcoming Events

- *Storrs Farmers Market* – The next Storrs Winter Market is scheduled for April 4, 2020 on the lawn of the Mansfield Public Library. Please continue to check the website for information about opening or rescheduling: storrsfarmersmarket.org.