

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: July 20, 2022

Please find my report concerning various items of interest to the Town Council and community.

1. Council Business:

- STEAP Grant – The agenda includes a resolution of support/authorization from the Council to apply for a STEAP grant from the State. As I noted at the last meeting, we have two potential projects. One is continued funding for the radio project. This project already has available match in the form of funding in the capital plan for the project. We can carve out a part of the project which is ready to go once grant funds are awarded. The second project idea was advanced from Park & Recreation to replace the artificial turf carpet at IRRRC. The project is not quite ready to go as it needs to be designed and bid specifications prepared. There is no identified or appropriated match for the project at this point. Based on cost estimates, the Town would have to put in an additional \$93,000. The total cost of the project is \$593,000.

I will be looking for some direction from the Council on which path to proceed down in order to prepare the grant and, if match is needed, prepare an appropriation for the first meeting in August.

- ARPA – The second, and final, installment of ARPA funding is due soon. The Council should be prepared to a second round of workshops to discuss funding concepts and needs which will need to find its way to a Town Meeting to appropriate. For your awareness, some of our earlier appropriations are getting to the point of being oversubscribed. Specifically, the non-profit assistance is under pressure now. As a result, we may want to think through how the program is designed by changing the funding amounts available. I have a partial list of items for further consideration/discussion.

2. River COG:

The Council of Governments will meet again on July 27, 2022.

3. Estuary Transit District:

The new larger, Transit District held a second Legislative Breakfast to update State and local leaders on the progress made by the District on July 13, 2022. The first meeting was on June 29 and had more participation from the representatives from the former Middletown Area Transit District. In addition to reviewing the current state of the merger with Middletown Area Transit and pending changes, recent State legislation was also flagged.

Two bills in particular could have a negative impact on short-term operations of every transit district due to a new State funding cap and near-term concerns over the ability to use state funds only to purchase electric buses after 2024 when the infrastructure to support charging is not in-place. Some legislative relief may be required in the next session.

4. Miscellaneous:

- Senior Program Coordinator – We are off to a great start with the new Senior Program Coordinator. She has made a number of good connections needed to start offering programs and found a number of interested seniors. I am working with her on formatting programs and accounting issues as we keep moving forward.
- Town Engineer Bid – As noted at the last meeting, the Town received 7 responses to our RFP for on-call Town Engineer services. The proposals are currently under staff review to narrow the field down to a smaller group that will be interviewed to assess their capacity and fit with the Town's expectations.
- Town Planner – The Town Planner position has been advertised. It will appear on the job board for the Connecticut branch of the American Planning Association as well as the job board of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) to cast a state-wide net. As I noted in my last report, my timing expectations are that July will be devoted to advertising followed by interviews in August. If we are hiring away from another town, any new employee will need to give notice which, for a position of this nature, should be more than 2 weeks. As such, the consultant planner relationship will likely remain in place through at least September.
- Sustainability Committee – Following the presentation from the Sustainability Committee last week, I am coordinating a number of items for Eric Bergman and the Committee. Part of that is representing the Town organization in a series of required webinars over the summer on equity. Equity is a threshold topic to be address in the Sustainable CT program. The other work done for Sustainable CT is not going to be considered on its own without the equity requirement being addressed sufficiently.