

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: May 3, 2023

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

1. Council Business:

- Filling Tax Clerk Vacancy - the part-timer working in the Tax Collector's office left to pursue a full time position with another community. The Town did advertise to fill the vacancy. I will need time at the next meeting for the Council to ratify the hire for this post.
- Sidewalk Project (Transportation Alternatives Program) – Previously, the Council discussed the viability of accepting a Transportation Alternative Grant to run sidewalks from the CVS to the Connecticut Water Company building. The grant comes with a 20% match. The Council will recall that this project was a grant that was sought back in 2019 and was originally rejected by the DOT. The influx of federal infrastructure funding brought new life to the original grant application. The amount of the Town's 20% match has ballooned since the time of the original application. When last discussed, the Council expressed some interest in the project but we were deeply concerned about the amount of local match required. The Department is still looking for the Town's interest in a project. Discussions are on-going with DOT staff regarding the scoping and cost of any partial project in the proposed area.

2. River COG:

The Council of Governments held a special meeting on April 26, 2023. Highlights of the meeting of relevance to Clinton included:

- Early Voting Report – The Regional Election Monitor reported that early voting may be rolled out for August 2024. The preferred legislation would have 10 days of early voting and require 3 employees at the voting station. The process is still being determined.
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) – The CEDS was presented for approval by the COG to serve as the strategy in the region. The intent of the plan is to have it approved by the federal Economic Development Agency (EDA) and gain access to additional federal dollars. The plan was approved by the COG. The next step is for the State to approve the plan and have the Governor sign-off on it before submission to the EDA.
- Regional Housing Plan – The Regional Housing Committee, which was a recommendation from the regional plan, will have its first meetings later in May. The Council will recall that Town Planner Abby Piersall was appointed as Clinton's representative to the Regional Housing Committee.

3. Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

4. Miscellaneous:

- Union Contract Negotiations – The Town is still at a stage of trading proposals with the 5 bargaining groups that are open for negotiations. Negotiations will be on-going after the last exchange of proposals. As noted previously, ultimately, tentative agreements will have to come to the Council for approval.
- Fish Ladder – The fish ladder project has taken a number of twists and turns. The project was originally envisioned as a fish ladder over an existing dam. Then the condition of the dam suggested that a dam removal project would make more sense and still fit within the intention of the grant funding the design. Dam removal did have an impact to the Water Company’s well field near Morgan High School. Their review of the project and potential impacts to the well head brings us back to examining the fish ladder. Final details need to be ironed out and further dialogue with the Water Company is necessary.
- Thriving Communities Grant – The COG received a grant under the Thriving Communities program offered by the federal DOT to help with transit oriented neighborhoods. Our region is the only awardee for this program in the State of Connecticut. The project is a joint effort of Clinton, Westbrook, Old Saybrook and Middletown aimed at building capacity to address the needs of transit-oriented neighborhoods. It will open the door to national level consultants aids the 4 COG towns in improving their communities to access additional federal funding.
- Small Business Grants - Applications are now being accepted for the 2023 Middlesex County Revitalization Commission’s (MCRC) Business Operating Grant Program. The program, funded through the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, offers grants of up to \$25,000 to qualified small businesses in Middlesex County Connecticut. The 2023 application window — April 20 to May 19 — is the first for the five-year program designed to provide financial and technical assistance to business owners so that they continue operations, and maintain, and grow, employment opportunities for Middlesex County residents. The grants may be used for equipment purchases, investments in new technology, leasehold improvements, marketing investments, and to mitigate negative effects of anticipated, and unanticipated, increases in operating costs as well as business interruptions from road/infrastructure projects in Middlesex County. As Clinton’s representative to MCRC, I will be on the grant screening subcommittee that will be reviewing funding applications. Information on the program was shared with the Chamber of Commerce upon announcement to spread awareness of the program in Clinton.