

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: May 19, 2021

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

1. Council Business:

- a) In-person Meetings: The House of Representatives took up a bill on May 11 which would extend the Governor's Emergency Powers to operate through Executive Order another 60 days (until July 20). The Senate followed suit on May 12. Under the bill, the Governor may extend the duration of remaining Executive Orders. The expectation is that Executive Orders that allow for electronic or hybrid meetings would be continued beyond May 20.

There was no language in the prior Executive Orders that prevented in-person meetings. Instead it allowed for the use of remote meetings (which has been our operating model for over one year now).

- b) Policy Work: I am working on a few other policy-related items that will need to be addressed by the Council. The Auditor flagged two more areas that require more attention. The retirement program established for the volunteer firefighters and police officers need to have trust documents prepared. Funds have been allocated and maintained as if they were a trust, but an actual trust agreement has been missing. I am working with our counsel and an outside vendor to solve the policy gap. The Council will have to approve the trust documents when they are ready.

2. CCM:

CCM held its Legislative Committee meeting on May 11, 2021. Highlights of the meeting included:

- CCM Budget – The budget for CCM was adopted and did not include an increase in dues.
- State Budget Overview – The Chair and Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee gave an overview of the Committee's work in developing the spending part of the State budget. The Legislature's budget serves as a negotiating position with the Governor's Office to finalize the State budget process. The budget as passed by the Appropriations Committee does adjust some of the revenue transferred from the State to local government. In this change in local government funding, some communities would receive more funding that was envisioned in the Governor's budget. Clinton would actually receive less than the Governor's proposed funding. Typically, the Governor's budget has been a "floor" in the budget process. It is not clear where budget negotiations will end and it will require continued monitoring.

- Pending Legislation – A high level overview was given on a number of bills and how dialogue on certain topics need to be continued.
- American Recovery Plan – The group discussed the interim guidance from the Treasury Department which was released on May 10. The guidance was still broad and vague to provide flexibility. Treasury will be doing further outreach and CCM will also provide more direction to support towns in managing these funds. It is important to make sure the funds are spent right as there is a risk for funding to be recouped if it is misspent.

3. River COG:

The Council of Governments will meet again on May 26, 2021.

4. Miscellaneous:

- Hammonasset State Park – This coming summer season will see the COVID-related restrictions at Hammonasset lifted. Last summer, DEEP limited the parking capacity in the park to 1/3 of normal. Given the progress in testing and vaccinations, the park will be fully open with normal hours, full amenities and full capacity for parking. This level of re-opening should help alleviate some of the pressure seen at the Clinton beach gate seen last year.
- Eversource Storm Response – Eversource has launched a new process to coordinate with cities and towns for storm response. A web-based tool will now be used which allows municipalities to report problems directly, community liaisons will be empowered with more information and dedicated crews and a staff will be assigned to towns during the different points in storm response. The order of Eversource’s priorities were also clarified.
- NFWF Fish Ladder Grant – The Council may recall that the Town tried to secure funding under a grant program offered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. The fish ladder would be installed to the rear of the Old Morgan/new Shops at Indian River to assist migratory fish in working their way inland (and over a dam) for spawning. Our first application was a planning grant and while competitive did not support the priorities for the NFWF for that grant round. We were encouraged to re-apply in the spring. At present, I am working with the same grant consultant to re-apply for the planning grant.
- Solar Evaluation – The Energy Committee connected with the Connecticut Green Bank to assess a number of town and school sites for possible solar installations. The Green Bank has a program which would handle the selection of a solar installer, the panels would be owned by the Green Bank and the Town/BOE would have to buy the power generated. They have an underwriting model for the size of the array and the potential reduction in cost. The Town sites did not seem to work from an economic stand point under the Green Bank’s underwriting model. The Library was economically marginal, but as was noted in the capital plan, a roof project needs to be done in the near term which makes it an undesirable site.

The school sites did yield are larger economic benefit and the results of the Green Bank’s survey was shared with the Superintendent. The Superintendent will vet the project idea with the BOE and determine where it fits within their building priorities.

- Paving Program – The roads targeted for paving this season have been selected. The road study helped identify roads in need of restoration. Additionally, the Connecticut Water Company providing funding to the Town to support road restoration under our paving program given the pricing secured by the Town. The road list and scope of work is as follows:

Re-Claim/Grade/Overlay

Grove Hill Road

Lochbourne Drive

Vine Road

Pine Place

Fieldbrook Avenue

Maple Avenue (sidewalks)

Leffingwell Road (sidewalks)

Mill and Fill Overlays

Hurd Bridge Road

Commerce Street (CT Water participation)

Grove Street (CT Water participation)

Commerce Street

Dan Vece Way

Glenwood Road (CT Water financial participation)