

## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: June 16, 2021

---

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

### 1. Council Business:

- State Budget Impact on Town Budget – The budget that was passed by the General Assembly provided for stability in the grant-in-aid amounts provided to Clinton. When our budget was crafted locally, we assumed grants-in-aid at the amounts included in the Governor's budget. Most significantly, the Governor's budget level funded ECS for Clinton instead of implementing the approved ECS formula change which reduces funding to Clinton. The Appropriations Committee passed a spending package that would have reduced the ECS funding amounts to Clinton – creating a potential hole in the budget of \$250,000.

The State budget which finally passed restores the ECS funding to Clinton that was lowered by the Appropriations Committee. This provides for stability in ECS funding over the next 2 years which removes a point of uncertainty from our local budget process.

- Stanton House Lease – I received another 6-month renewal for the lease of land from the Stanton House which abuts the Pierson School. The Council will recall that the Stanton House would like to see the land returned to them and restored to grass. The Town has an interest in keeping the playground and relocating it to another park. The budget for FY21-22 included capital funding to move the playground. I will bring a request to approve the lease at the next meeting once we start planning and scheduling removal of the playground.

### 2. CCM:

CCM held a Legislative Wrap-Up meeting on June 10 to review bills that passed during the regular session of the General Assembly. Some of the bills that impact towns like Clinton include:

- Remote Meetings – A bill which would have permitted the ability to conduct remote or electronic meetings was passed by the House, but was not taken up by the Senate. As the Governor's Executive Order which allows for electronic meeting to take place will expire at the end of June, there is strong interest in seeing a continuation of remote meetings. The CCM analysis is that it is likely some aspects of the bill could resurface in the Budget Implementer Bill. Since the original bill died, it is not clear what will be picked up to move forward and what restrictions will be put in place.

- Bottle Bill – The Bottle Bill was amended for the first time in 40 years which expands the types of containers which are subject to a deposit fee, an increase in the deposit fee and a requirement for DEEP to develop an incentive program to support communities interested in implementing unit based pricing (or pay-as-you-throw) program. Of added note, the bill includes a surcharge being placed in so-called “nip” bottles. Wholesalers are supposed to return that surcharge back to municipalities based on local sales. Those dollars are supposed to be directed toward “environmental measures” which was defined as litter elimination and, depending on the amount of funding, hire a recycling coordinator to educate the public to increase recycling volumes.
- Zoning – Zoning reform was a topic of consideration during the session spread across several bills. The piece of legislation that was passed. A number of changes to local zoning were created, but municipal “opt-outs” were also included. Another important change was a mandate for 4 hours of training (every other year) for Planning & Zoning Commission members.

CCM will also hold a regular Legislative Committee meeting on June 15, which I will report on verbally. For the Council’s awareness, in terms of State legislative process, even though the regular session ended the budget implementer bill needs to be seen for other items impacting municipalities. Additionally, since there will be a special session other bills could surface (beyond the press coverage on the Marijuana Bill) in that session too.

### **3. River COG:**

The Council of Governments will meet again on June 23, 2021.

### **4. Miscellaneous:**

- UConn Stormwater Corps – As a follow-up to my last report, UConn is interested in working with Clinton as one of their study communities this summer and I confirmed our continued interest. Again, a team of students will look at stormwater retrofit opportunities with a focus on town-owned property. The field work will be 2 weeks at the end of June or early July. The students would deliver some suggestions/recommendations to assist with stormwater management and respond to changes in state mandates on stormwater. It is also important to add that being involved in this program during the summer also opens the door to unique grant funding that can pay to implement one of the recommendations.
- Town Hall Masking – The Governor loosened masking requirements on May 19 for those that were vaccinated. Initially, I did not change our masking requirement in Town Hall looking for stabilization in test results, vaccination and community spread of COVID. Since we did not see an increase in positive test results after Memorial Day, vaccination rates have stabilized and community spread has reduced (the last positive test was on May 30), I feel comfortable relaxing masking in Town Hall for the vaccinated. Of course the plexi-glass partitions and social distancing efforts will remain in place.
- Town Council Meeting Room Change – Town Hall has been re-opening for special events which creates some conflict with meeting schedules now that we are in a position to conducting in-

person meetings. Most immediately, we will have a scheduling conflict in July with the Clinton Arts Society. Council meetings will need to move back to the Rose Room. This would involve closer seating. The extent to which council members are vaccinated and comfortable being unmasked allows for a return to normal. The BOE meets with closer seating, but members are masked.

- Fiscal Controls – Earlier in the fiscal year, I implemented fiscal controls over all departments to get the Town Manager’s pre-approval on all expenditures over \$1,000. You will recall that I took this step in response to a potential economic downturn with COVID and the subsequent low interest tax penalty program which impacted our cash flow. I do not have those concerns going into the new fiscal year as the economy re-opens and recovers and tax collections return to a “normal” process. As a result, with the start of the new fiscal year on July 1, I will lift the control put in place. Normal budget monitoring will be put in place and department heads will have responsibility to manage their budgets without needing pre-approval from me to start the process of expending their budget.