

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: October 20, 2021

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

1. Council Business:

- MIRA – The Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) held a virtual meeting on October 14, 2021 to update participating towns on the steps they have taken to address short-term needs in handling municipal solid waste. Short-term in this case refers to the next 5 years which would mark the end of the agreement each town has to place its waste with MIRA.

MIRA issued a series of RFPs to handle waste within the State, operating existing transfer facilities and shipping waste out of Connecticut. These reflect the current business model for MIRA as it will go out of the trash-to-energy business. Shipping waste out of state creates logistic issues as well as different cost impacts as fuel and transportation costs will increase. All of those issues will combine to create new pressures on tip fees paid for waste disposal.

To help manage costs, MIRA is looking for town input on the flexibility allowed within our current agreement. Towns can withdraw from MIRA during a “window period” if they want to use another disposal option. Private haulers interested in shipping MIRA waste want greater certainty in the waste flow so they can be efficient in pricing and securing necessary equipment. As a result, towns could get better tip fee pricing. The downside is a loss in flexibility over the next 5 years if another viable option were to become available.

At this point, town feedback is not a commitment. It is more of a gauge of interest. I would like some Council feedback on this before answering.

2. CCM:

The Legislative Committee met on October 7, 2021. With the General Assembly out of session, CCM's legislative focus is on approving a slate of legislative initiatives for the next session. Policy recommendations for advocacy were heard and considered regarding public safety, environmental management, municipal liability and transportation. Additional policy committees will be reporting to the full CCM Legislative Committee in the future months.

3. River COG:

The Council of Governments will meet again on October 27, 2021.

4. 9 Town Transit:

The full Board of 9 Town Transit met on October 15, 2021. The board meeting follows a series of subcommittee meetings that I now also participate in – Finance Committee, Personnel Committee and Expansion Transition Committee. Business of the transit district continues to focus on moving forward with the merger with Middletown Transit. All towns are working on different timetables to adopt the resolution of support already approved by the Town Council. Operationally, the District is discussing a fare to support the XtraMile program which was run as a pilot and enjoyed subsidy from CARES Act funds.

5. Miscellaneous:

- Harbor Management Plan RFP – I have finalized the Harbor Management Plan RFP after getting feedback from the Harbor Management Commission. The RFP will be on the street shortly and an award later in the fall would be anticipated. As a reminder, the project is being funded by a grant from the Connecticut Port Authority.
- Historic Preservation Grant – Work remains on-going coordinating with Peggy Adler to submit a grant to the State Historic Preservation Office to fund a consultant to aid in documenting the historic assets in the Commerce Avenue/Leffingwell Road area for designation as a historic district. We are working on the grant proposal making sure that all of the requirements are met for submission.
- Preparation of Issuing Bonds – The Finance Director and I met with our Municipal Advisor to plan our next entry into the market for debt. We are also trying to determine if a refunding opportunity makes economic sense. So called “advance refunding” for debt used to be issued as tax exempt. The Tax Reform Act approved during the Trump administration removed the tax exemption for advance refundings which increased the cost of such transactions. As it relates to Clinton, it limits the age of notes that can be refunded which leaves us a smaller pool of debt that can be handled as tax exempt. Efforts to restore the tax exemption of advance refundings is being debated in Washington and may not be resolved in time for our next issuance.

Preparing for bonding will continue until we actually go to the marketplace in February 2022.

- Regional Housing Plan – A public meeting was held regarding the Regional Housing Plan being put together by the COG was held on October 12, 2021. A recording of the meeting can be watched at <https://youtu.be/lqHJCNQ5ZqY>. The next step in the process will be to hold local meetings with each participating town (which includes Clinton) as it relates to each community’s mandates housing affordability plan. It is my intention to reach out to a cross section of boards seeking a representative to be involved in the Clinton process as housing touches to P&Z as well as Economic Development. If there is Council interest in this effort, it would be helpful to get feedback and the extent to which members may want to be involved in the Clinton-specific part of the regional plan.