

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: April 6, 2022

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

1. Council Business:

- ARPA Funding Applications – As I noted previously, applications for ARPA funding have been submitted by non-profit and arts entities. To-date, ten (10) applications have been received. Every application submitted has been reviewed, acknowledged and additional information has been requested (be it a tax compliance form or the need to clarify the nature of their funding request with more details). As clarifications are provided, we can move forward with releasing funds as appropriate.

As I write this briefing, I am anticipating that other requests will be presented to the Town from non-profit entities. One organization that was in the original review process decided to not pursue funding once the application process was made available to insure funds were accessible to other worthy non-profits.

Additional funding requests were included in the ARPA spending plan which was reviewed with the Council and subject to public comment. Those sending categories were \$50,000 or less and, by Charter, fall under the Council's singular authority to make special appropriations. Motions for those activities will have to be planned for a future Council meeting. My intention for those items was to prepare them after the initial push on ARPA funds have gotten into an established rhythm and the budget has moved forward.

The accounting for disbursements has been set up and the drawdown forms for internal use are ready for use.

- FY22-23 Budget – The monitoring the budget for further changes remains an on-going exercise. Some assumptions have been refined. However, we are still looking at an unpredictable climate for certain supplies, commodities and other needs of the Town. I plan to have additional items for the Council during your special meeting following the public hearing.

2. River COG:

River COG held its regular meeting on March 23, 2022. Highlights of that meeting of local interest included:

- Workforce Alliance – The regional Workforce Alliance presented an overview of how COVID impacted employment, job losses and job gains made as the pandemic abates. The number of

jobs available exceeds the number of applicants seeking work which is making it difficult to fill positions. Additionally, like most recessions, Connecticut is late in recovery with only 75% of the jobs lost during the pandemic have been recovered.

- Hammonasset Trolley – The DOT will fund the operation of the Hammonasset trolley again this year to connect people to the beach. The route will be the same as last year connecting Old Saybrook to Hammonasset via Clinton. The service will only run on the weekends given the low ridership during the week experienced last year.
- Household Hazardous Waste – The schedule for household hazardous waste has been set for the year, with the new model of operating satellite only collections instead of satellite and fixed site collection in Essex. The first event will be in Clinton on April 23.
- Legislative Update – A list of bills being tracked by the COG was circulated for bills of interest or impact on the region. The COG also provided testimony against the bill that would roll back the mill rate cap on motor vehicles. Their testimony advocated providing an income tax credit for paid motor vehicle taxes. As I pointed out previously, the bill as presented is harmful to Clinton as the Governor's proposal does not make the Town "whole" for the revenue lost by changing the mill rate cap.

3. 9 Town Transit:

The Transit District held a special meeting to respond to recently passed legislation that would provide free transit service. The district approved a motion to suspend fares from April 1 until June 30, 2022 to mirror the statements and legislation approved in Hartford.

4. Miscellaneous:

- Eversource Vegetation Management – As a follow-up to a prior Council meeting discussion, Eversource held a meeting with their arborist and tree contractor to discuss the "vegetation management" efforts to be undertaken in Clinton this year. A significant portion of the town has been identified for tree trimming. The intent of the program this year is to re-establish the clearances that were created in 2018 to maintain reliability for their power lines. Tree owners will be consulted as part of the trimming effort to get their consent. The Tree Warden and Emergency Management Director were also part of the Eversource meeting.

The project is timed to begin in May and will run throughout the year. The first phase of the work will be focused south of Route 1 starting near the Westbrook line.

- Harbor Management Plan – As many on the Council already know, the Town was awarded a grant of \$40,000 from the State Port Authority to update the Harbor Management Plan. After issuing (and then re-issuing) a request for proposals, we have a responsive team of professionals that can perform the anticipated work. The proposed cost of the project is in excess of the grant amount that was awarded. At present, I am trying to work with the consultant team to right-size their proposed approach to fit within the grant budget.

- Landfill – The Town received 3 RFP responses to aid in capping the former landfill. The proposals are under review at present to assess feasibility and our ability to award a contract to one firm.
- Hiring – Hiring across a number of departments is on-going. Filling the Finance Department and Land Use vacancies are on the agenda for Council ratification. We are still in different phases of the hiring process with WPCC, Senior Programs and Program Coordinator in Human Services.
- Marina Concession Stand – Liv's confirmed that they are looking forward to opening the concession stand at the marina again this year.