

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: September 6, 2023

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

1. Council Business:

- STEAP Grant – The 2023 STEAP grant application for funding toward replacing the hand-held “subscriber units” used by the Fire Department was submitted in time for the due date of August 18, 2023. Support from our legislative delegation was also sought. The expected notice of awards is November.
- Pierson – As part of the Council’s on-going due diligence, additional information was requested from the three development teams. At the time of writing this report, we are still waiting for the responses to be submitted. The Council will need to schedule another special meeting to be held in Executive Session for the purposes of discussing the sale/lease of real estate.
- Library Request – The Library is seeking time with the Town Council during a workshop meeting to discuss potential interior renovations to the current library building. They will be looking for some support for architectural design and cost estimating. A fund raising campaign and State Library Construction Grant funds would also be sought in addition to funding from the Town. A copy of the request is attached to this report.
- Marina Concession Stand – The initial term to operate the concession stand at the marina has come to an end and the operator does not wish to continue operating the stand. As a result, we will have to go out to seek proposals for potential operators. Prior to doing that it will be worth a brief conversation regarding the Town’s expectations in operating the concession stand.

2. River COG

The River COG held a special meeting on August 23, 2023. Limited business was conducted. Of note to Clinton, the grant application made to the DEEP which would fund a study evaluating options for a new regional municipal solid waste solution is still in process. DEEP asked for the application to clarify some points for further consideration.

3. CCM Legislative Committee

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities is not holding any Legislative Committee meetings during the summer months as the General Assembly is not in session. The policy committees will start meeting to discuss items which CCM may advocate for in the upcoming session.

4. Miscellaneous:

- Middlesex Community Revitalization Commission (MCRC) Grants – MCRC received funding from the State to make small business grants to help businesses recover from business disruptions (COVID or the Swing Bridge Project for example) or the support job growth in the region. Grants will be made to eligible businesses over the next few years. Coffee Break was awarded the MCRC grant – one of 15 businesses to successfully secure funds from MCRC. As similar program was offered by the Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer), which was open to Clinton businesses. Fringe was awarded a grant under that program.
- Town Hall EV Charging Station – The second allocation of ARPA funding included partial funding to replace the EV charging station at Town Hall. The project involved ARPA funding which was also leveraging a grant to pay for new, upgraded EV charging. The project is underway. Unlike the current charger, the replacement will require users to pay for their electricity.
- Wayfinding Sign – The wayfinding signs for Grove and Commerce Streets have been up for 1 year. The third sign to be installed/replaced was located at the Exit 63 off-ramp. After a fair amount of delay, that sign is now in process to update the directions information and to have the sign follow the same design as Grove and Commerce Streets.
- Façade Program Update – The second approved façade project has been completed. Clinton Glass has a new appearance. A third façade project should begin for Milone Chiropractic. The fourth project, Grand Apizza, is pending approval from the State Historic Preservation Office. SHPO's review has been taking approximately 30+ days before approval is given for a project to proceed.
- Union Contract Negotiations – Negotiations remain on-going with the Police Union as the last union contract to be settled as well as negotiating the terms of their pension agreement which was left unresolved for several years.
- Hiring – The Town has re-advertised the department director for Human Services. An IT position remains unfilled and we are still recruiting candidates for interviews. Two more positions have also been posted – the budgeted part-time Economic Development Coordinator to support the EDC's focus in a support role or conducting business outreach interviews and WPCC Clerk. These two part-time positions have a candidate pool that is being reviewed to schedule interviews.

Building Improvements for The Henry Carter Hull Library 2023

The Board of Trustees of the HCH Library would like the help of the Town Council to engage an architect with library renovation experience to look at the library, meet with the Board of Trustees, examine the community feedback and work together to improve the current library building.

The staff at HCH polled our community twice, pre-pandemic and post-pandemic. Both surveys highlighted the extreme satisfaction with the staff at HCH Library, the collection, and the growing programming offerings for *all* ages. Some areas of needed improvement were cited including an increase in study areas and quiet rooms, dedicated tech help and even more adult/senior programming. Patrons want to be able to borrow a computer, they want more senior activities and they wish the library was bigger.

A focus group was also assembled to solicit feedback. It was composed of professional staff, trustees, and patrons. These stakeholders met 4 times and discussed community needs, library resources and services. Some of the concerns expressed were the lack of building identification, getting more use out of the outdoor space, addressing the New Arrival/AV area on the first floor, and generally updating the interior.

The staff of HCH was also asked to give feedback regarding the day-to-day functionality of the building. Almost all of them mentioned the outdated interior and exterior doors, the outdated floors and 2nd floor lighting and the many points of confusion for patrons when they enter the building. Staff also mentioned the lack of AV options in all of our smaller meeting rooms, the fact that there was no signage on the building and that it was time for general upgrades - seating, floors, paint, etc.

To fund these upgrades the administration and board of trustees would like to pursue state library grants, engage in a capital campaign, and request financial help from the town.

The Henry Carter Hull Library has grown to become Clinton's community center offering more programs and a broader reach of services than the Board of Trustees could have ever imagined back in 1998 when they moved the library into its current home.

It is time the Henry Carter Hull Library building reflect the important place the library holds in our community.