

## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: May 6, 2020

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

**1. Council Business:**

- a) Selection of Auditor: As was noted previously, the Town had to issue an RFP for Town Auditor with the withdrawal of the prior auditor RSM. The proposals were vetted and an interview was held with the top proposer. The appointment of the Auditor will be brought to the Town Council for approval at your next meeting (May 20, 2020).
- b) Town Attorney RFP: Proposals from interested firms were received on April 6, 2020. The Town received 10 responses from firms. The proposals are under review now to develop a short list for the Town Council to consider. Prior to holding "virtual" interviews with short-listed firms, we need to have a discussion on proposals and firms recommended for interviews.

**2. Connecticut Conference of Municipalities:**

- a) As Executive Orders continue to be issued CCM continues to host video conferences to discuss new orders that town operations and offer advice on possible responses.

**3. River COG:**

- a) The River COG met virtually on April 22, 2020. Items of interest from the Agenda were as follows:
  - Briefing was given from the Regional Election Monitor on how the Presidential Preference Primary could operate. The possible scenario of a mail-in ballot was discussed and the areas in which the State would fund the balloting effort. No final decisions have been made yet.
  - Regional Transportation Safety Plan update was discussed by DOT staff. The plan will focus on high risk locations where road safety improvements should be made. Data collection is planned for the Fall.
  - Lower Connecticut River Valley Transit Study was discussed again. The study is meant to assess the merger of the 9-Town transit program that services Clinton with Middletown Transit at the request of the DOT. The study has slowed as the process for public involvement needs to be determined.
  - Household Hazardous Waste has been sidelined due to COVID-19 restrictions. COG staff are working on a plan to get the service operational again within the confines of restrictions that may be put in place as a result of the pandemic, social distancing and managing the risk of handling household hazardous waste.

- Regional Plan of Conservation and Development is still in process. COG staff are working on a local meeting process with each town. The details have yet to be determined.

#### 4. Miscellaneous:

- a) COVID-19 Recovery: I am sure the Council is aware of discussions through the media about re-opening the Connecticut Economy and what that may look like. The Governor announced the phasing approach to re-open the economy based on increased testing and trends for infection rates. At this point, guidance needs to be given for the rules under which businesses will be able to re-open. It is easy to envision that masks and social distancing will be part of any re-opening. The experience we all have at the grocery store would be duplicated elsewhere. There was some specificity to restaurants being able to re-open for outdoor dining only. However, the rules and cleaning procedures associated with opening and restroom facilities need to be developed. The Governor stated that re-opening would be an opt-in choice for businesses to make once their type of business is given the ability to re-open.

The State is also looking for municipalities to activate a long-term recovery framework. The concept is supposed flow from local emergency management plans. A local committee is supposed to assist in vetting community needs and potential resources. The resources would be in-kind services or financial resources that arise locally or in a region – it is not tied to State or FEMA funding. At this point in the pandemic recovery, the anticipated needs for the long-term recovery framework would focus on financial assistance for those hardest hit by COVID shutting down the economy, counseling, rent support, food security, etc... I will be working with the Emergency Management Director on starting Clinton's process.

- b) The Town was approached by DEEP Fisheries staff to serve as the project sponsor for a fish ladder to be installed on the Old Morgan School site which would provide the means for migratory fish to access above the Upper Millpond dam. The planned sponsor was the Connecticut River Salmon Association who had to back out to focus on another project. The site of the fish ladder is in a small park area that the Indian River Landing developer is obligated to deed back to the Town.

In this case, the role of project sponsor involves some light administrative work with a grant consultant who would secure funding to design the fish ladder and pay for the services of the consultant. The construction of the fish ladder would follow the same process. There should not be any financial exposure for the Town in the process. Any direct expense can be recovered in the grant process.

After construction of the ladder, the operations and maintenance of the ladder would fall to DEEP staff who are already involved with the fishway in the Menunketesuck Wildlife Management Area. Town involvement with the project through the Conversation Commission or others is purely voluntary.

It is my intention to confirm the Town's role as project sponsor for the fish ladder project.

- c) To help control expenses during these extraordinary times, I have put in place further controls to make sure we end the fiscal year strong and able to meet cash flow going into the next fiscal year. I advised all department heads the only necessary and essential expenditures should be made. Any expenditure greater than \$1,000 requires the Town Manager's prior approval to continue. Capital projects are getting the same treatment with the timing of projects to be discussed prior to moving forward. Given the uncertainty of our environment now and in the near term, extra steps need to be put in place now.
- d) I have been participating in weekly calls with the Health District staff and representative of the member towns to get public health updates on the COVID-19 pandemic. The meetings have been helpful to understand the issues being faced in our neighboring communities and it is much more of a "boots-on-the-ground" perspective of issues which are not always covered in weekly calls with the Governor and his Department Commissioners.
- e) Contract negotiations with the employee unions continue moving into the "new normal" of social distancing. We are trying to make forward progress even though in-person meetings are a challenge right now.