

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: July 1, 2020

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

1. Council Business:

- a) Financial Controls: As noted earlier, financial controls were put in place to limit expenditures, require pre-approvals on expenses over \$1,000, freeze capital projects and hiring. The goal has been to focus on necessary and essential expenses. As a new fiscal year will start on July 1, these controls will remain in effect. The key metric for the Town at this point is to assess the strength of revenue collection through the end of July. The reduced interest rate program approved previously by the Council ends on October. So a year-to-year comparison of revenue will be important to gauge the strength of collections during the first month. Decisions on expenses and management to cash flow will come out of that key measure.

2. Connecticut Conference of Municipalities:

- a) As I reported earlier, CCM conducted its first Legislative Committee meeting virtually on June 16, 2020 since March. The primary thrust of the discussion was the possible agenda for a Special Session of the General Assembly. The state of the State's budget was also of concern as well as the timing of deficit mitigation efforts which could include reductions to municipal aid. It was suggested that budget changes may not be known until the Fall.
- b) CCM has also been advocating for an increase in the distribution of CARES Act funding. The federal government provided the funding as part of a relief package for COVID-19 with a requirement that a portion be dedicated to municipalities. Thus far, the State has only identified a small amount to be distributed as part of reimbursing municipal response expenses. There was the suggestion that the balance of the distribution could be made as a part of the expenses associated with re-opening schools in the Fall. Given the amount of funding still available, the matter deserves continued monitoring.

3. River COG:

- a) The River COG met on June 24, 2020 covering a wide range to topics, including:
 - Transit Study. A draft report has been put together which would result in the merger of 9-Town Transit with Middletown Area Transit. The governance of the merged districts and the facilities plan has been completed. A Memorandum of Understanding between the DOT and the two districts is in process which would layout the path forward merging the two. Public engagement over the plan is anticipated during the summer.

- Two interns working for the COG this summer on Sustainable CT gave a presentation on the program and their role in helping towns work on their Sustainable CT certification.
[Presentation included in the Agenda Packet]
- The COG's FY2021 budget was adopted with its primary revenue from the State uncertain. The budget allows for contingencies to respond to a reduction in state support and modifies the annual work plan in the worst case scenario. Municipal dues were approved with no increase (as was budgeted in the Town's budget).
- COVID recovery was discussed again, leading to a discussion on how municipal services might have to be revised going forward.
- MIRA was reviewed at some length given the recent vote of the MIRA board to end the possible improvement to the Hartford waste-to-energy facility. The burn plant would be retooled to serve as a transfer station to ship waste out of the State. MIRA has an obligation to continue taking waste until 2027. However, towns can opt out of a cheaper alternative appears in the marketplace. Local or regional decision making is complicated by the lack of a policy from the state or mandate/incentive to create a market for solid waste.

4. Miscellaneous:

- a) Joel & Eliot Roof Project: The Roof Building Committee received a report on the bid responses for the roof work at Joel and Eliot Schools. The Committee recommended awarding the bid to lowest responsible bidder. They were also seeking a Clerk of the Works to serve as the "owner's representative" on the project to supervise the quality of the contractor's work.
- b) Human Services Advisory Commission: I recently met with some members of the Human Services Advisory Commission. Given the recent turnover in Commission members, the group is trying to get its arms around its charge. To that end, they are in the process of re-writing their by-laws. I advised them on some aspects of the by-laws and offered that they should be ratified by the Town Council. We also discussed performance measures which might help better inform the Commission (and others) on the work and impact of the Human Services Department.
- c) Town Hall Status: Town Hall re-opened to the public on Monday, June 22, 2020 for services. The public has adapted well to the limited access points and are still conducting a significant amount of business from a distance rather than in person.