

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Honorable Town Council Members

FROM: Karl F. Kilduff, Town Manager

DATE: October 6, 2021

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

1. Council Business:

- Hiring – A number of approved positions are ready for Council action to ratify the Town Manager's hiring choice. I will have candidates in three positions to discuss with the Council now that the hiring/interview process is completed.
- ARPA Funding – I am still collecting additional information on potential projects. Additionally, some funding projects that are regional in nature have advanced in other communities. Specifically, funding to support a new refrigerator truck for the Shoreline Soup Kitchen has been appropriated by Old Saybrook, Essex and East Lyme. This effort is on the list of projects that has been discussed. Funding commitments are still being sought from Chester, Deep River, Killingworth, Lyme, Madison, Old Lyme and Westbrook (in addition to Clinton).

2. CCM:

CCM launched a new task force in response to the recent increases in crime seen in some cities and towns. Its title is the Task Force on Violence Prevention, Recidivism and Community Relations. The intent is to de-politicize the issues being faced by communities, share ideas and possibly offer solutions during the next legislative session. The task force had an initial kick-off meeting with more to come in the future.

The Legislative Committee is scheduled to meet again on October 7, 2021.

3. River COG:

The Council of Governments met on September 22, 2021. Highlights of that meeting included:

- DEMHS Update – The State will open more state-sponsored COVID testing facilities in response to the spread of the delta variant. It was also reported that the State is looking for councils of governments to play a larger role in long-term recovery efforts. Every COG will be meeting with the State and FEMA on regional and local projects that can aid in economic recovery. FEMA has taken on the role of providing funding "match-making" services to try and connect projects with funding sources.
- Transit District Merger – The COG voted to endorse the merger of the Estuary Transit District with the Middletown Area Transit District pending DOT funding. Each town in the two districts are also being asked to take similar action.

- Regional Plan of Conservation and Development – The regional plan was finally approved.
- ARPA Funding – COG members were briefed on the ability of the Middlesex County Revitalization Commission to support towns in vetting projects and funding request for ARPA funds. The Commission already has a number of small lending/grant programs and ARPA funding decisions could follow their process.
- Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan - The plan received its final FEMA approvals and the COG is preparing hard copies of the final document for distribution to the participating municipalities.

4. 9 Town Transit:

The Board of 9 Town Transit met on September 17, 2021. The primary business of the transit district continues to focus on moving forward with the merger with Middletown Transit. The bylaws for the transit district need to be updated and a series of operation studies will need to move forward with DOT funding that will support the merger of the districts.

Additionally, a number of vacancies will occur as representatives from other municipalities retire or relocate. As result, remaining board members have been asked to assume added responsibilities. I will serve on the Finance Committee, Chair the Personnel Committee, and be a member of the “Expansion Transition Committee” which is working on the merger of the two transit districts.

5. Miscellaneous:

- MIRA – The board for the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) met in September and are looking for a group meeting date with member towns to given them an update on the project and direction MIRA is headed. The date for the meeting has yet to be scheduled, but will take place later in October. I will brief the Council on the contents of the MIRA meeting which I would anticipate will address the future, the direction of solid waste and tip fees.
- Preparation of Issuing Bonds – The Town will need to go back out to the marketplace in early 2022 to place new Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs) and convert existing BANs into long-term bonds. While the actual placements won’t take place until February, we do need to plan now and make the necessary preparations. Also, this placement will see us work with a new firm, but we will still be represented by the same Financial Advisor who has been assisting the Town for a number of years which will provide continuity.
- Discussions with Amtrak – There has been interest by some members of the community to beautify parts of Clinton and those concepts require coordination with, or possible permission from, Amtrak. While time consuming on both ends, this was a worthwhile discussion to understand the Amtrak process for work near their right-of-way and their expectations. The Town was also given the limits of their right-of-way in certain areas. The age of the age of the maps and the lack of local documentation made this helpful. Parts of the right-of-way will be formally marked by Amtrak staff.

- Budget Development – As I noted during our budget workshop, I am looking for department heads to provide more detail on capital projects in advance of the budget review workshops in February and March so the Council can have a multi-year capital improvement plan that provides details on project needs, priorities, alternatives and consequences.

Additionally, Maryann and I will meet and discuss the next steps in our budget processes based on the input given from the Council during the workshop.