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To: Town Council

From: Matt Hart, Town Manager

CC: Town Employees

Date: August 1, 2017

Re: Town Manager's Report

Below please find my report concerning various items of interest to the Town Council, the staff, and the community:

- **Executive Assistant to Town Manager** – I am very excited to report that Brittany Stephenson started work last week as our new Executive Assistant to the Town Manager. Brittany comes to us with some great experience working for CRCOG and Dallas County, Texas, as well as a Bachelor's degree from Baylor University. Brittany is replacing Patience Haile, who is retiring this week after 25+ years of dedicated service to the Town. Both Brittany and Patience have been enormously helpful to me during my transition period. Brittany and I are very excited to work with the Town Council and our fellow town staff in service to our community.
- **Communicating with Town Staff** – With assistance from IT, Brittany and I have created a new email for use by our office – TownManager@WestHartfordCT.gov. Both Brittany and I will receive copies of emails sent to this address. I would encourage Town Councilors looking for assistance from Town staff to send an email to the new Town Manager address, and we will forward the email to the appropriate staff to prepare a response. Councilors may also contact me by cell or at matt.hart@WestHartfordCT.gov. Councilors with questions for Corporation Counsel should continue to contact our attorneys directly, preferably with a copy to me.
- **Initial Areas of Focus** – I am developing a work plan and suggested goals for my first year, which I will submit to the Town Council for its review and endorsement. For my initial areas of focus, I need to learn our systems and meet the people. In order to do this, I will be holding individual meetings with Town Councilors, the Town's directors, other key staff, and various stakeholders in the community. I will also be touring our worksites to meet as many staff members as possible. Other initial priorities include the status of state revenue and the FY 2017/18 Budget, the UCONN property, and various "Center" issues, including incentive zoning, parking, and the entertainment ordinance.

- **FY 2017/18 Operating Budget and CIP** – As you know, the General Assembly has not yet adopted a budget for FY18, and state revenue remains unclear. Peter Privitera and I have directed Town staff to proceed cautiously and to refrain from making any non-essential purchases. We will also review all vacancies and determine which positions need to be filled, and which could be delayed or restructured. In addition, we will review all capital projects in order to identify potential reductions for both the current and upcoming fiscal years. Lastly, we need to determine when to issue the motor vehicle property tax bills. I will keep you informed of developments on the budget.
- **Billing for paramedic service** – We are receiving a number of questions on this issue, in part, I believe, because the Town's initial billing for Medicare patients was delayed. As explained by Chief Allyn, on August 1, 2016 the fire department began delivering paramedic or advanced life support services (ALS) to the residents and visitors of West Hartford. During the initial period of service implementation, the department was seeking provider status with the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). The Town received its CMS provider status in the spring of this year. CMS allows a service to reverse bill for up to 12 months once provider status is approved, which is why many Medicare patients are now receiving a bill for service rendered in late 2016 or early 2017. The rates for paramedic services are set by the State of Connecticut Department of Public Health and CMS sets the rate for Medicare billing.

Also, prior to the town taking over paramedic service, the patient received only one bill from AMR for both BLS and ALS. A patient now receives two bills - one from the ambulance company for BLS and one from the West Hartford Fire Department for ALS. Medicare will only pay the ambulance company for transport to the hospital (BLS service) and will not pay for the town's paramedic service (ALS). Most insurance companies will cover some amount for the ALS service.

Chief Allyn and I are going to meet with the billing agency to review the matter in more detail and to discuss communications with the public. We can then report back to the appropriate council committees, Finance & Budget and Public Safety. We can also share the positive feedback we have received regarding the service, as well as updated revenue projections.

- **Community Connectivity Grant Program** – Today, the Planning and Zoning Division and the Engineering Division (Community Development Department) submitted a grant application for the Connecticut Community Connectivity Grant Program administered by the CTDOT. The proposed project requests \$103,085 to install bicycle signage and markings for intended, on-street, shared routes identified in the Town's recently adopted Bicycle Facilities Plan. The Bicycle Facilities Plan, adopted in May 2016 by the Town Council, aims to improve upon the Town's existing network of "shared", "separate", and "off-street" bicycle

routes. Development of the plan included extensive public outreach with residents and the Town's Bicycle Advisory Group. Completion of the plan in its entirety is expected to take a number of years; Town staff would like to take advantage of this funding opportunity in order to expedite this element of the plan and provide this service more quickly to our community.

- **Ridgewood Road improvement project underway** -The Town's reclamation contractor finished their part of the Ridgewood Road improvement project today, August 1. The asphalt was reprocessed and a new road base was installed. Weather permitting, paving will begin this Thursday from Tunxis Road to West Point Terrace and will take two days to complete. The detour will remain in place until the street paving is done. The paving contractor will return for a few more days to complete asphalt curbing and driveway apron replacements. Lastly, pavement markings will be applied during the night. The Department of Public Works will install bicycle signage as the roadway will provide bike lanes in each direction. Ridgewood Road improvements, which are a continuation of last year's segment from West Point Terrace to I-84 ramps, include replacing catch basins, removing curbing and driveway aprons, installing new road base material, reshaping the roadway, repaving, and replacing the curbing and driveway aprons. This project is entirely funded with Town bonds through our Capital Improvement Program.
- **Cornerstone Aquatics Center shutdown for cleaning** - A temporary shutdown at Cornerstone Aquatics Center is planned from August 19 through August 27 for facility cleaning and modest renovations.
- **Transition of HealthFitness management of Cornerstone Aquatics Center**- Cornerstone Aquatics Center, now under the management of HealthFitness, has a new phone number and web site. The new phone number is 860-561-8270 and the website CornerstoneAquatics.org. New membership ID cards will be distributed in September. Please check in with the Cornerstone office to update your membership file and establish a new billing account. And, say hello to Michael Kerrigan, the new general manager, who is also a West Hartford resident!