



TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

50 SOUTH MAIN STREET
WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06107
(860) 561-7440
www.westhartfordct.gov

Memo

To: Town Council
From: Matt Hart, Town Manager
CC: Town Employees
Date: November 14, 2017
Re: Town Manager's Report (**Amended**)

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

Council Business

- New Town Council – Congratulations to returning Councilors Chris Barnes, Shari Cantor, Leon Davidoff, Dallas Dodge, Beth Kerrigan, Ben Wenograd and Chris Williams, and new Councilors Mary Fay and Liam Sweeney, upon your election to the Town Council. I would also like to acknowledge all of the candidates who ran for local office, and I appreciate the enormous amount of time and dedication put into the campaign. The new Council will conduct a formation meeting at 8:00 PM on Tuesday, November 21, 2017. At that meeting the new Council will appoint its officers and members to its standing committees. In addition, we will thank outgoing Councilors Judy Casperson and Denise Hall for their many years of dedicated service to our community.
- Finance & Budget Committee Meeting – The Finance and Budget Committee will meet at 8:00 AM on Friday, December 1, 2017 to discuss potential adjustments to the Town's FY 2017/18 Budget to reflect changes in state aid. Town staff will present a series of recommendations to the Committee in advance of the meeting. All councilors are welcome and encouraged to attend.

Departmental Reports

- *Police Chief Retires* - Police Chief Tracey G. Gove announced yesterday that he will retire from the West Hartford Police Department on November 30, 2017. Tracey Gove was appointed Police Chief on December 13, 2011 and has been a member of the West Hartford Police Department for 22 years. Chief Gove will be taking a position with The Travelers as Director of Corporate Security where he will oversee security operations in the Greater Hartford area and partner with Internal Investigations and Executive Protection. I would like to thank Chief Gove for his dedicated service to the Town, and the assistance that he has provided to me during my brief tenure as Town Manager. We will certainly miss him. Assistant Chief Dan Coppinger will serve as interim Chief while we conduct a competitive search to find a new Police Chief. I will inform the new Council of the details of the search process once they are solidified.

- *ICMA Annual Conference* – I was fortunate to attend the recent ICMA Annual Conference held this year in San Antonio, Texas from October 22-25th. At the conference I attended the annual symposium of the league of Women in Government, as well as education sessions the new Urban Crisis attributable to gentrification, strengthening the city manager/police chief relationship, and smart and sustainable infrastructure, among other topics. I also attended my first meeting as a member of the ICMA executive board, representing the Northeast region. I greatly appreciate the Town Council's support for my professional development activities.
- *MDC Budget Update* – On November 2nd, the MDC held a budget workshop with Town Officials to continue a discussion on their Proposed 2018 Sewer and Water Budget. Town Officials were provided an opportunity to ask specific line item questions related to budget increases and operational changes. Those questions were addressed by MDC senior staff and forwarded to the MDC Finance Committee for review and consideration during their budget deliberations. The Finance Committee will make a final recommendation to the full MDC Board which will adopt its budget in December. The Proposed MDC budget reflects an *ad valorem* tax increase to the Town of \$1,008,300 which equates to roughly a 10.5% increase over the current fiscal year. Finance Director Peter Privitera and I will closely monitor the process and along with officials from member communities, will work towards reducing that increase to a more sustainable level.
- *Thanksgiving Holiday Closings; Trash Delay* - The Town of West Hartford wishes you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving. Due to the holiday on Thursday, November 23, there are a few changes in service and hours of operation.

The collection of trash and recyclable items will be delayed one day in the Thursday and Friday collection areas only. Thursday's area will be collected on Friday and Friday's area on Saturday.

All town facilities, libraries, schools and Recycling Center will be closed on Thursday, November 23.

The following facilities will be closed the day after Thanksgiving, Friday, Nov. 24. They are Elmwood Community Center, Elmwood Senior Center, West Hartford Senior Center at Bishops Corner, and West Hartford Public Schools.

Other recreation facilities will be OPEN on Friday, November 25, including Westmoor Park, Veterans Memorial Skating Rink and Cornerstone Aquatics Center.

The West Hartford Social Services office will be closed; all visitors to Social Services will be redirected to the Leisure Services office for assistance. The Leisure Services office in Town Hall will be open all day.

The West Hartford Libraries will close early at 5:00 PM on Wednesday, November 22 and will be closed for the holiday, Thursday, November 23. The libraries will be open on Friday, November 24 and Saturday, November 25 and will be closed on Sunday, November 26.

- *Outdoor Aquatics Survey* – The Department of Leisure Services is reviewing the operation of its neighborhood pools to examine how well it meets the needs of the community during the eight-week summer season. To collect feedback, Leisure Services conducted a seven-question survey from November 3-12 and received 424 responses. A community outreach meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 15th at 7 PM at

Elmwood Community Center to share the survey results and receive additional comments from residents.

- *West Hartford Libraries Kindness Project* - To celebrate the spirit of kindness and to coincide with the release of the new movie *Wonder*, based on the popular book of the same title by R. J. Palacio, the West Hartford Libraries are happy to present The Kindness Project. Residents of all ages can participate by donating toiletries and personal hygiene items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, lotions etc. at any of the three libraries from November 20th to December 15th. Children and teens are invited to help create “kindness cases,” colorful Ziploc bags which will be filled with the donated items and distributed to those in need through the West Hartford Food Pantry. Check out the library’s website for more details or to register your child to participate.
- *Maximum Daily Parking Rates Change on 11/15* - The maximum daily rate in the Brace Road lot, Farmington Ave. lot and Town Hall lot will be removed on November 15th, per Council resolution on 10/11/17. Instead of the flat fee of \$7 for unlimited hours, motorists will be charged \$1.50 per hour with a 30-minute grace period.
- *Housing Rehabilitation Program* – As a reminder to our residents, the Town’s Housing Rehabilitation Program accepts applications throughout the year, and provides financial and technical assistance to eligible homeowners.

Funded through a Community Development Block Grant from HUD, the program is currently in its 43rd year of assisting income eligible owner-occupied properties with repairs to correct housing code violations. These violations can include reduction of lead based paint hazards, replacement heating systems, roofing, electrical upgrades, replacement windows and entry doors, and handicapped accessible components (ramps, stair glides).

From July 1, 2017 to the present, eight properties have participated in this program. Three are in the preliminary inspection/spec-writing stages and have not yet gone out to bid; five are either completed or under contract, with a total cost of \$89,853. For additional information, please contact Sally Nolen at 860-561-7562 or via email at sallyn@westhartfordct.gov.

- *Tax Bills are Due* - The motor vehicle tax bills were due on November 1; the last day to pay without interest is Friday, December 1st. The tax office will be open on Friday December 1st from 8:30 to 4:30.

Second installment real estate bills and personal property bills, as well as supplemental motor vehicle bills (for automobiles that were registered between October 2, 2016 – July 31, 2017) will be mailed mid-December and are due January 1, 2018. The last day to pay without interest is Thursday, February 1, 2018.

- *Pumpkin Drop-off* - The Town of West Hartford is offering a special pumpkin drop-off drive to help reduce the weight placed in our curbside trash containers, now through November 15th. The pumpkins will be taken to an organic waste processing plant where they will be turned into clean renewable energy. Diverting waste from the waste stream helps to reduce the cost of waste disposal.

Pumpkins can be dropped off at 17 Brixton Street in a marked dumpster located on the southeast side of the main parking lot. The Department of Public Works encourages

residents to drop-off pumpkins to support the Town's ongoing effort to reduce waste and promote recycling in our community.

- *Electronic Speed Signs Installed to Slow Speeding Drivers* - In an effort to raise awareness and to reduce speeding through neighborhoods, the Town Council directed the Engineering Division to implement a creative and cost-effective solution. With the help of Public Works, 14 new electronic speed signs were recently installed along major roadways. Motorists exceeding the speed limit will see their speed on the digital display and the words 'SLOW DOWN.'

Town Engineers are seeking public opinion on a special reward feature of the electronic signs on North Main Street and South Main Street. Compliant motorists, those who are at or below the speed limit, will see their speed and a smiley face emoji. If the public likes it, the smiley face will be added to the other signs too.

The electronic signs also collect valuable traffic speed and volume data which can be used by the Engineering and Planning Divisions as well as the Police Department enforcement efforts.

A new trailer-mounted sign was also purchased and will be deployed throughout town by the Police Department.

- *Aid to Puerto Rico and Virgin Island Refugees* – A cross-departmental team has been tracking refugees from Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands who have lost their homes as a result of Hurricane Maria that hit on September 21, 2017. West Hartford has assembled resource information written in English and Spanish so the refugees can get assistance. The packet includes 2-1-1 Resource Directory, FEMA assistance, West Hartford Social Services brochure, West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District directory of services, and West Hartford Public Schools residency and registration information. West Hartford has eleven individuals, including five children, who are staying with family until their homes are safe to inhabit. FEMA's assistance deadline for aid is November 20. Information is found on the town's web site.
- *Holiday Gift Giving* - The Social Services Office is collecting \$25 gift cards from stores such as Target and Wal-Mart now through December 15, 2017. The gift cards will be distributed to low income parents at the annual holiday party on December 19th. The gift cards allow parents to tailor their presents to their child's interests. Gift cards may be dropped off in Room 306, Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM-4:30 PM. For more information, please call 860-561-7561.

Outside Agency News

- *News from The Bridge Family Center* - The Bridge is now accepting Medicare at its mental health clinics. Also, The Bridge is running KIDS (Kids in Divorce & Separation Groups) at nearly all West Hartford Elementary Schools. This group is for children who are separated from a loved one from divorce, separation, military service, or incarceration.

Tickets for the Children's Charity Ball will go on sale on December 1st.

Upcoming Events & Announcements

- *Food Pantry* – The Food Pantry is in critical need of the following items: macaroni and cheese (almost out!), applesauce and canned fruit, pasta sauce, peanut butter and rice. Donations may be left in the lobby of town hall (Monday-Friday, 8:30AM-4:30PM). We cannot accept open and/or expired items.
- *Express Your Holiday Spirit of Giving begins November 15* - Help Elmwood Senior Center stuff its Elmwood Express bus with gifts for Toys for Tots! Please bring an unwrapped toy to the senior center during its month-long collection that begins November 15 and runs through December 11, 2017.
- West Hartford Community Theater presents *Once Upon a Mattress* - West Hartford Community Theater presents Rogers and Hammerstein's musical satire *Once Upon a Mattress*. The show continues with its second weekend performance at Hall High School on Saturday, November 18 at 7:00 PM and Sunday, November 19 at 1:30 PM. For tickets, call (860) 992-9428 or visit WestHartfordTheater.org.
- *Special Thanksgiving Eve Comedy Night* - Take a break from your Thanksgiving preparations and come to Playhouse on Park for an extra-special Comedy Night on Wednesday, November 22 at 8:00 PM. Tickets are now on sale for the show featuring co-headliners Jess Miller and Scott Higgins. Tickets are \$15, all seats reserved. This event is BYOB! Call the box office at 860-523-5900 x10 or visit PlayhouseOnPark.org.

Mark your calendar for these upcoming special events in December:

- Holiday Stroll, Friday, December 1st, 5:00-8:00 PM in West Hartford Center and Blue Back Square. Please note the change from Thursday to Friday night.
- Festival of Trees at First Church of Christ, Friday, December 1st, 5:00-8:00 PM
- Mitten Run, Sunday, December 3rd, 10:00 AM, Blue Back Square
- Inspiring Equity, A Multi-Media Exhibit, December 14th and 16th, Town Hall
- Fire on Ice Chanukah Celebration, Sunday, December 17th, 4:00 PM, at Blue Back Square