



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: January 9, 2018
Re: Town Manager's Report

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

Council Business & Meetings

- *Finance, Budget and Personnel Committee* – The committee will meet tomorrow, January 10, at 8:00 AM in Room 312. Agenda items include the auditor's report, a discussion of the bond rating, and a review of the budget process.
- *Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Community and Economic Development* – The subcommittee will meet tomorrow, January 10, at 6:30 PM in Room 312. Our discussion will focus on the proposed community engagement process to solicit community feedback regarding future uses for the former UCONN West Hartford campus.
- *Public Safety Committee* – The committee will meet at 8:00 AM this Thursday, January 11, in Room 312, to receive reports from our Police and Fire Departments. We're working on the paramedic billing process and related issues at a staff level, and plan to resume that discussion with the committee in February.
- *Community Planning and Physical Services Committee* – The committee will meet next Wednesday, January 17, at 8:00 AM, in Room 312. Staff is finalizing the agenda and will post towards the end of this week.
- *Administration & Technology Committee* – The committee will meet at 8:00 AM on January 22, in Room 312. Agenda items include the status of the Town's surplus fiber inventory and other topics.
- *Human Services Committee* – The committee will meet at 8:00 AM on January 25, in Room 312. We plan to continue our discussion on Compassionate Communities, with a staff report on this item.

- *Town Council Orientation* – The Mayor and I would like to hold an orientation for new councilors to review topics such as the Freedom of Information Act, the Council’s land use role, committee responsibilities, and the budget process. I’m working with Corporation Counsel and the Mayor to finalize content for this session, and will provide more information on this topic prior to the next meeting.

Staff Reports

- *DPW battles 2018 Blizzard* - The Dept. of Public Works’ plan of attack for the 2018 blizzard began at 3 AM on Thursday, January 5, 2018, when crews began pre-treating the roads. All DPW trucks were deployed to maintain main roads during the height of the storm’s 2-3 inch per hour snow fall. By 11:00 AM all available resources (town and contractors) had been deployed to keep pace with the accumulating snow. All roads were cleared and passible by 12 AM Friday, January 6, 7 hours after the accumulating snow had stopped.

A total of 12 inches fell in town. Post storm clean-up work will continue into next week.

Paine’s Refuse & Recycling was able to collect 90% of Wednesday’s route. Thursday’s and Friday’s route were collected as scheduled.

Totals for the Christmas Day and the January 4th Blizzard are:

- Christmas Day storm: 495 staff hours worked
- Jan. 4 blizzard: 935 staff hours worked
- 14% of the \$269,815 overtime budget was used during these storms
- 12% of the Treated Salt budget was used during these two events to keep the roads safe before and after the storms

Totals for all eight storm-related events to date are:

- 3900 staff hours
- 40% of the \$269,815 overtime budget has been used
- 49% of the Treated Salt budget has been used to keep the roads safe before and after the storms

I would like to commend all of our Public Works, Plant and Facilities, and Public Safety staff for their excellent work to keep us safe during the holiday season. Great job, team!

- *Water Main breaks* – The sub-freezing temperatures caused a number of bursting water pipes throughout the region and West Hartford. The MDC reports that there have been 19 leaks in West Hartford since December 22.
- *New Tax Law creates a rush to pay taxes before the end of the year* – The new federal tax laws that went into effect on January 1 resulted in a significant increase in the volume of taxpayers paying their January installment before the end of 2017. Although the tax office is normally closed to the public on Fridays, the office remained open on Friday, January 29 in order to accommodate the volume increase. The office continued to process December mail through the first

week of January. Only a few towns in the State of Connecticut allowed taxpayers to pay their taxes in advance of the July billing cycle, and West Hartford was one of those towns. Over \$4,300,000 was collected in advance of the July 2018 billing.

- *WHPD welcomes new officers and dispatcher* – On December 18, 2017, the West Hartford Police Department welcomed four new officers. They are:
 - Ian Ranaldi of Bristol
 - Blake Zimmerman of Enfield
 - Maria Albini of Southington
 - Generoso Coscarelli of Stamford

The new officers began training at the Connecticut Police Academy on December 29, 2017, and are expected to graduate on June 12, 2018. The officers will then begin their four-month Field Training Program in West Hartford. They will complete their training and be on their own by November 2018.

The Police Department also welcomes Public Safety Dispatcher Nicole Salter of Simsbury. Ms. Salter's first day was January 1, 2018.

- *Grand Re-Opening at Cornerstone Aquatics Center* - Cornerstone Aquatics Center held an Open House for West Hartford residents and families on Sunday, January 7, 2018, from 12 to 3 PM. The event included a tour of the facility, including the newly completed, fully accessible Family Changing Rooms. Demonstrations of fitness classes were held in the Multi-Purpose Pool and Fitness Studio including Water Spin, Water Yoga, and Zumba and Yoga. Attendees were encouraged to ring in the New Year with a new fitness plan at Cornerstone Aquatics Center now under new management with HealthFitness.
- *The Trex Film Plastic Challenge* - Starting on November 15, America Recycles Day, King Philip Middle School joined Trex in their Film Plastic Challenge. Since then, students collected 45 pounds of film plastic, enough to fill a pick-up truck!

Film plastics are commonly used for food packaging, grocery bags, dry cleaning bags, newspaper sleeves, and bread bags. Trex is a leading recycler of plastic films to produce synthetic building materials commonly used for decks and outdoor structures.

DPW is especially grateful to Chuck Joseph at Shop Rite West Hartford for serving as the designated film plastic recycler for this challenge. Please remember that all grocery retailers and some local department store have designated receptacles for film plastic recycling.

- *Christmas tree collection* - The annual Christmas tree collection program by the Department of Public Works Department will continue now through Monday, January 15. If your tree was buried by snow from the storm, please dig it out otherwise crews will not be able to collect it. DPW will be making two town-wide sweeps, weather permitting. Residents are reminded that the trees are recycled into wood chips and should be free of plastic bags, ornaments, lights and stands.

Residents may also bring their Christmas trees to the Recycling Center at 25 Brixton Center, Monday-Friday, 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Please note, there are no weekend hours at the Recycling Center until April.

- *The Kindness Project* - To celebrate the spirit of kindness and to coincide with the movie release, *Wonder*, the West Hartford Libraries created The Kindness Project. From November 20 to December 15, residents of all ages donated 3,669 toiletries and personal hygiene items that were assembled into 294 colorful and creative duct tape bags. These 'kindness bags' now stock the shelves of the Food Pantry.
- *Clearing Public Sidewalks* – As a reminder, per Town ordinance, West Hartford property owners are responsible for removing snow and ice from the sidewalk along their property line within 12 hours after the storm or sunrise, whichever is later, and keeping them clear of snow and ice. Heavily used sidewalks near schools and public buildings, and the commercial areas are particularly important. To report a snow clearing violation, please call the West Hartford Police Department at (860) 523-5203.
- *Hydrants* - Please help the Fire Department and protect neighboring properties by shoveling around fire hydrants.
- *Rockledge Winter Trails are open* - Get on your hiking boots, cross country skis or snow shoes and try out the winter trails at beautiful Rockledge Golf Club. Choose from the yellow trail (.6 mile); the red trail (1.6 miles); or the blue trail (2.2 miles.) All three trails start and end at the Golf Shop and are clearly marked with colored markers spaced .1 mile apart. Trail guides and new tree identification plaques along the way will add to the enjoyment. Trails are open daily, dusk to dawn.
- *West Hartford Public Schools Mentoring Program* – January is National Mentor month. To learn more about mentoring and how you can make a difference in the life of a West Hartford Public School student, join us for the Mentoring 101 workshop on Tuesday, March 13, 2018 at Conard High School. Contact Carol Wilkes to learn more at Carol_Wilkes@whps.org.

Upcoming Events & Announcements

- *Safest Cities in the U.S.* - SafeHome.org announced that the Town of West Hartford made its 2017 list of the Safest Cities in the U.S. and ranked No. 15 in Connecticut. SafeHome.org has conducted similar studies in the past; however, this year the organization went a step further and used a variety of data sources and statistics, including the FBI's latest report of how many and what types of crimes occurred, crime trends, law enforcement officer ratio, demographics, population density, unemployment rate, income, education level etc. to come up with its scoring. To learn more about the methodology, please visit <https://www.SafeHome.org/Safest-Cities/CT/>
- *22nd annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life* - Join us for the 22nd annual celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life on Monday, January 15, 2018 at the West Hartford Town Hall Auditorium, 50 South Main Street, from 10:00-11:30 AM. Each year the event that pays tribute to Dr. King's ideals and vision grows more popular and inspiring. The celebration is free and open to all ages.

This year's keynote speaker is Jay Williams, president of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. The Reverend Mia Douglas of Asylum Hill Congregational Church, Hartford will give the opening prayer and Mayor Shari Cantor will welcome attendees. Tammy Exum, who served on the West Hartford Board of Education from 2013 to 2017, will serve as master of ceremonies.

Each year two students from the public high schools are selected to give the student perspectives on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. This year Grace Williams of Conard High School and Deonna Hightower of Hall High School have been selected. Musical performances will be provided by the Conard High School Jazz Combo, Voices of Bristow Middle School, and Conard's Voices of the World Choir.

Immediately following the celebration, attendees are invited to stay for an interactive discussion on race, equity, and action steps that build on the messages that will be shared on this holiday.

- *Thinking Beyond Disabilities: A Community Conversation about Intersectionality* - Join us for an evening of thoughtful conversation about disabilities, access and the intersectionality of race on Monday, January 15, 7:00-8:30 PM at Solomon Schetcher Day School of Greater Hartford, 26 Buena Vista Road. This panel conversation will highlight the perspectives of four Connecticut leaders who have dedicated their lives to advocating on behalf of people with disabilities and their families. This conversation will emphasize how race and culture intersect. The evening will culminate with an audience Q&A.
- *Fracking Waste in CT and Local Town Ordinances* - Jen Siskind, a CT coordinator of Food & Water Watch, will give an educational presentation entitled "Fracking Waste in CT and Local Town Ordinances," on Wednesday, January 10 at 7 PM in Room 314 at Town Hall. Anyone interested in the topic is encouraged

to attend. The presentation is sponsored by the West Hartford Clean Energy Commission. For more information, contact Gary Bent at gdbent@earthlink.net.

- *Children's Charity Ball* – Tickets are going fast for the 2018 Children's Charity Ball on Saturday, January 20, 2018 at the Marquee Events in Downtown Hartford (former G. Fox Building). The Children's Charity Ball is the signature fundraiser for the Bridge Family Center and helps fund critical support programs for children, adults, and families throughout the Greater Hartford region, including vital mental health counseling. The elegant, black-tie event features a cocktail reception, sit-down dinner, live and silent auctions, and dancing for 375 guests. For tickets, go to www.BridgeFamilyCenter.org.
- *Call for Proposals: 2018 How-To Festival* - West Hartford's second-annual How-To Festival is scheduled for Saturday, March 24, 2018. Show your neighbors what you know at the how-to festival! To submit your proposal, go to WestHartfordLibrary.org. Over 3,000 people are expected to attend this all volunteer community event, featuring over 50 local experts, enthusiasts, hobbyists, and professionals sharing their particular passions with others.