

FINAL REPORT OF MY TENURE



I am pleased to share the sixth biweekly report of 2023 and the last of my tenure. I am grateful for the assistance of the Community Building Leadership Team over the past 18 months in sharing with the Town Council and community topical subjects throughout this period along with comprehensive and frequent updates on the state of Town operations.

As you well know, we collectively remain busy in workshops since March 16 reviewing the Proposed Budget submitted by the Town Manager, as prescribed by the Bloomfield Town Charter. On next Thursday, March 30, a public hearing will be held on the Proposed Budget followed by the Town Council beginning its deliberations on an Adopted Budget that will be approved at a meeting following the Annual Town Meeting on May 1, 2023.

During my tenure as Town Manager, I have often cited the Town Charter in fulfillment of the number one listed “powers and duties” charged to the Town Manager in Section 502: “To see that all laws and ordinances governing the Town are faithfully executed.” What better way to conclude my final biweekly report than to cite the Town Charter with regard to the next and most important phase of our budgeting process: Budget Adoption by the Town Council.

Section 904. Powers and duties of council on budget.

- a. Within ten (10) days after the manager has submitted the proposed budget set forth in Section 903 above, the town council shall cause sufficient copies to [be] made so that they may be available to the public during business hours in the office of the town manager. Full copies shall be available for examination in the town clerk's office, the board of education administrative offices and the town library and its branch(es) and shall be available for sale at the cost of production.
- b. Within fifteen (15) days after the manager has submitted the proposed budget, a public hearing shall be held on the proposed budget.
- c. The council shall then prepare a budget which complies with any minimum standards or requirements of the State of Connecticut and shall hold the annual town meeting as described in section 905 to explain the proposed budget, which shall include a period for public comment on the proposed resolution adopting said budget. Said annual town meeting and public comment shall be held the first Monday of May.
- d. Both the public hearing on the manager's budget and the annual town meeting required by this Section shall be at places designated by the council with at least five (5) days' notice given by publication in a newspaper having a circulation in the town and by posting in the town hall and on the town web site, if any. A copy of the estimates and the budget shall be filed in the office of the town clerk, the board of education administrative offices and at the town library and its branch(es) and summary copies shall be made available for general distribution in the office of the town manager at least five (5) days before the respective hearing. Section 905. Annual town meeting on the budget.
- e. The budget shall be adopted by a majority vote of all the members of the town council at a subsequent meeting after both the public hearing and the annual town meeting have been completed, but in no event later than the second Monday in May.

Section 905. Annual town meeting on the budget.

An annual town meeting for presentation, explanation and public comment on the budget shall be held on the first Monday in May. It shall be called and warned by and over the signature of the town manager and in the manner provided by the general statutes, shall be held at such place as may from time to time be designated by vote of the town council, and may be adjourned from time to time as the interests of the town require. It shall be called to order by the town clerk or, in the absence of the town clerk, by the town manager or the mayor of the council and shall be conducted as provided by the general statutes. The town clerk shall serve as clerk of the town meeting but in absence of the town clerk, an acting clerk shall be appointed by the town manager or the mayor of the council.

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Bloomfield Public Library (BPL)

We're Here for You! And We'll Continue to be Here for You

Keep up with our buildings project transitions [here](#). Please note that Prosser Library will be closed on Tuesdays and both libraries will only be open from 2pm – 8pm on Thursdays moving forward. BPL plans to close both libraries to the public and transition into swing space(s) April 14, 2023. While we transition, library services will be reduced or unavailable. Please refer to [this document](#) for updates.

BPL had a Blockbuster Year

Our [Fiscal Year 2022 Annual Report](#) is now live on our website. Some highlights include the passing of the referendum for the library buildings project, a 10.61% increase in Bloomfield library card holders, 129,510 materials borrowed, 75,830 visits to the library, 14,437 public computer sessions, 12,698 reference questions answered, and 28,515 visits to bplct.org. We invite you to flip through the report yourself to see more highlights. It is full of pictures and includes an almost-complete listing of the more than 65 community partners who help make our library shine.

Breaking Down Barriers for Ebook Access

BPL's Social Justice Mission Statement reads: "We are working on breaking down barriers to access every day." The latest cause in which we are engaged is access to ebooks. Two bills in the state legislature aim to set fair terms and pricing for library e-books and downloadable audiobooks. An [op-ed in The Hartford Courant](#) on March 12, 2023 written by Laura Irmischer, West Hartford Public Library; Elizabeth Lane, Bloomfield Public Library; Sarah Kline Morgan, East Hartford Public Library; and Bridget Quinn, Hartford Public Library outlines the following issues.

Did you know that Libraries pay up to six times more than consumers for the same digital books? Libraries must also repurchase those titles they already paid for when their licenses expire after a certain amount of time or number of checkouts - typically 24 months or 26 checkouts. Publishers can also choose not to sell certain titles to libraries or delay library sales well after the release date. This is the opposite of how libraries have purchased print books for decades, and its harming libraries and their patrons.

E-books and downloadable audiobooks serve people with visual or reading impairments. Digital audiobooks serve people who struggle to read and provide literature where there might not otherwise be access. Digital books also serve people with limited mobility. When publishers decide libraries cannot purchase some books, that means only people who can afford to pay for a book can have access to the content. That is the antithesis of what libraries stand for.

Healthy Relationships: Empowering our Teens

In partnership with Bloomfield High School and Interval House, BPL Librarian Rachel Tonucci organized presentations about teen dating violence and healthy relationships for six classes of Health and PE students. Topics covered included: teen dating violence statistics, types of abuse, and unhealthy vs. healthy relationships. Interval House Instructor Kay Munoz ended the sessions with "You all now know more than the average person about domestic violence." We hope the students who attended the informative sessions will all be able to apply and share the lessons learned in their own lives and the lives of those around them.

Building and Land Use

Town Planning and Zoning Commission

The Bloomfield Town Plan and Zoning Commission will be planning to schedule a special meeting for April 4th, 2023. Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances, the Commission was unable to meet on March 23, 2023 due to a lack of a quorum present. The items scheduled for the 23rd will be moved to April 4th.

Economic Development

The Bloomfield Economic Development Commission/Development Agency held their last meeting on Tuesday, March 14th, at 8:30 am. Goman+York, the town's economic development consulting firm, gave a presentation regarding Municipal Development Plans. The Town also continues to work with business owners and developers to assist in their plans for expansions or adding new tenants

Community Visioning and Plan of Conservation and Development

The new website and survey for Community Visioning and the Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is now live. Please visit planbloomfield.com to sign up for updates, take the survey, and learn a little bit more about the visioning and POCD process. This will create a ten year plan for the Town of Bloomfield, so all input is valued.

Human Resources

Moving On Up

The Human Resources Department is very excited to announce the promotion of Mario Salza to Crew Chief with the Public Works Department.

Help Wanted

The Bloomfield pool and summer camp will be open before you know it. Please spread the word....we are busy recruiting for all open positions. Let's make this a great summer!

Public Safety (Police)

Staffing

Police Recruit Murphy is doing very well at the Hartford Police Academy. There are currently two police officer vacancies in the Police Department, and the Detective Unit has been working diligently on backgrounds to seek qualified candidates.

Redesigning - Stay Tuned

We will be meeting with the Office of Strategic Communications and Government Affairs next week regarding creating a fresher look to the Police Department website. Their plan is to redesign an entirely new site for us.

Public Works

Spring Clean Up

With the milder weather we have had the chance to start our spring clean ups early. Every spring Public Works sweeps all 110 miles of our public roads and our parking lots. In addition we clean up all of our parks and grounds of accumulated leaves and sticks.



Fix It Up

The facilities division has been gathering proposals for the interior renovation of the IT Department to accommodate the organizational realignment. The interior renovation will provide adequate office space for the new employees.



Spruce It Up

The Facilities Division has will be utilizing the funds transferred into the capital account for flooring replacements to replace flooring in the Bloomfield Volunteer Ambulance building main entry, report room, kitchen, and lounge. Flooring in this building was in excess of 20 years old and in desperate need of upgrading. In addition the carpeting in the Finance Department and the Registrar of Voters offices of the Town Hall will be replaced within the next 6-8 weeks.



Organic Recycling Pilot Program

The organic waste pilot program that was negotiated with our solid waste vendor will be starting soon. This 6 month pilot program will take place in 4 neighborhoods in town and will include approximately 250 households. The goal of the pilot program is to collect data on amounts of material collected and level of participation of our residents. With this data we will be able to more accurately determine the cost of a permanent program possibly in the future.



Senior Services

A Note of Thanks

State Representative Bobby Gibson returned to the Senior Center on March 20 to present another panel discussion concerning *Resources for Seniors and Their Families*. He was joined by Connecticut Department of Aging & Disability Commissioner Amy Porter; State Director of AARP Connecticut Nora Duncan; members of the Bloomfield Commission on Aging; Bloomfield Senior Services; and Bloomfield Social & Youth Services.

The 10 Warning Signs

We are partnering with Bloomfield Public Library to present the Alzheimer's Association program "The 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's" at 3:00 pm on Thursday, April 20. This event will be offered on a hybrid basis. Guests may participate in person (in the Great Room of the Human Services Center) or via Zoom.

The Clock is Still Ticking

Time is running out on this year's income tax season, but there are still a limited number of appointments available. AARP Tax Aide volunteers will be at the Senior Center on Wednesdays through April 12.

Strategic Communications & Government Affairs

Spring Is In the Air

The Office of Strategic Communications and Government Affairs has sent its second edition of "In Bloom" to the printer, with an anticipated date of April 1 for it to hit households. This edition focuses on the spring and early summer events going on in town, including a feature on the Wintonbury Hills Golf Course as well as summer programs in town and pool hours.

In addition, the newsletter also places a big emphasis on Earth Month events around town and it celebrates the Town's commitment to honoring Juneteenth.

It's Our Civic Duty

On Thursday, March 16, we held our first public training session for our soon to be launched CivicClerk platform. This Agenda and Meeting Minutes management system will help us develop uniformity amongst our boards and commissions. This training was well attended by our board chairs and staff liaisons to our various boards and commissions.

Speaking of platforms developed by CivicPlus, we are continuing to make progress with our new website through the Civic Engage Central Platform.

On A Budget

Our department presented its proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget on Thursday, March 16. With the creation of the Office of Strategic Communications and Government Affairs during the 2023 fiscal year, this was the inaugural budget for our department. In addition to creating our budget from scratch, our department also absorbed the General Government budget and is in charge of all budgets for the Town's Boards and Commissions.

Very truly yours,

Stanley D Hawthorne

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