

Good Saturday Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councilors,

I am happy to share the latest biweekly report with the assistance of the Community Building Leadership Team (CBLT) on topical subjects and departmental updates. On behalf of the CBLT and all community builders, thank you for your policy direction this year and happy holidays to each of you.

TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD WEBSITE REDESIGN UPDATE AND MORE

The Town Manager Office of Strategic Communications and Government Affairs (SCGA) is quickly making up for lost time in the long-running project to overhaul our outdated and inefficient website. While I have been at the top of the list for those disappointed by our lag in meaningful progress, with confidence, I can now tell you that those days are behind us with the newly deployed and focused resources of SCGA.

This division of the Town Manager Office is now expertly guiding the process of implementing the strategic goal of providing open and transparent communications between the Town of Bloomfield and its neighbors. In the next several weeks, SCGA will transition the design concept and content development from current website to the new Civic Engage Website. Content will enhance for usability and accessibility, and website pages will be far easier to navigate.

SCGA has already expanded our communication capacity in issuing media press releases for new hires, notable town events, activities and programming. In addition, SCGA sign on with Archive Social connects directly to the Town's social networks to capture and preserve all the content that the Town posts and engages in-context and in near real-time. With this secure archive capacity, SCGA can easily manage online communications and help the Town stay compliant with public records laws, regulations, and recordkeeping initiatives. The office is continuing to build Town social media accounts, including reactivating our Facebook account and the new activation of the Town's Twitter account.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT (IIJA) UPDATE

The Town of Bloomfield included the Blue Hills Avenue Complete Streets – Phase 3 Project in a regional application for federal *Safe Streets for All* grant funding in September 2022. The Safe Streets for All Program receives funds under the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)*. The application also includes projects from Canton, Farmington, Hartford, and Suffield with overall coordination by the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG). Farmington is the lead applicant.

[From the U.S. Department of Transportation website:] “The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) [i.e. the IIJA] established the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program with \$5 billion in appropriated funds over the next 5 years. In fiscal year

2022 (FY 22), up to \$1 billion is available. The SS4A program funds regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries.”

Eligible activities are develop or update a comprehensive safety action plan (“Action Plan”); conduct planning, design, and development activities in support of an Action Plan; and carry out projects and strategies identified in an action plan. [CRCOG had already adopted a qualifying Action Plan.] Only local and regional agencies are eligible for funding under the program (i.e., state agencies are not eligible).

The Blue Hills Avenue Complete Streets – Phase 3 Project will install complete streets safety improvements for roughly 1,100 feet of Blue Hills Avenue (State Route 187) from Walsh Street to Park Avenue. The improvements proposed for Phase 3 will be similar to those included in Phases 1 and 2 of the Blue Hills Avenue Complete Streets Program for which construction tentatively begins next summer. The Phases 1 and 2 project run from the Town line with Hartford to Britton Drive.

Recognized and proven safety counter-measures are to be installed with the Phase 3 Project to reduce roadway fatalities and serious injuries include a road diet, bicycle lanes with buffer strip separation, upgrading sidewalks to standard width, pedestrian enhancements at the two signalized intersections, a crosswalk beacon at the intersection serving the library, crosswalk visibility enhancements, and pedestrian level decorative lighting. The project will also include the installation of granite curbing and brick surfacing between the curb and the sidewalk.

The estimated project cost, including design and construction, is \$2,500,000. The Town would be responsible for a 20% local match of \$500,000 over the course of the fiscal years 2024 (\$60,000) and 2025 (\$440,000). The grant program is very competitive. Notice of grant awards will issue in January; we expect.

[Note: Public Works will include the \$60,000 in their Community Investment Plan (CIP) request for fiscal year 2024; however, we will know of success in award of the grant well before budget finalization.]

As the grant program will run for 5 years, four additional rounds of funding of approximately \$1 billion each will be available. As indicated above, in order for projects to be eligible, they must be included in CRCOG’s Action Plan (unless the Town adopts its own.) CRCOG is expecting to update its plan next year to accommodate additional strategies with this in mind.

Other priority strategies include traffic calming, complete streets improvements, bicycle and pedestrian network improvements, intersection safety improvements, improving first responder services, and other transportation network related safety improvements. Staff is compiling a list of potential projects/strategies for inclusion in the updated CRCOG Action Plan.

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Bloomfield Public Library (BPL)

BPL Teen Advisory Group: Let Your Voices Be Heard

ATTENTION TEENS: You are invited to join the Bloomfield Teen Advisory Group (TAG)!

WHO: Students in grades 7-12 who live or go to school in Bloomfield.

WHAT: We want your ideas about the new libraries, which programs to offer, the teen book collection, and more! TAG is a dinner club (yes, you get FREE FOOD) and your involvement will help transform the future of Teen Services in Bloomfield.

WHERE/WHEN: December 12 and January 17 at 4 pm at McMahon Wintonbury and January 24 at 4 pm at Prosser

WHY: You will earn volunteer hours, have leadership opportunities, build your resume, and also get free books.

Holiday Gift Card Drive to Benefit Interval House

In October, our community partners at Interval House in Hartford presented a program about the issue of domestic violence. We learned that out of the 24 towns Interval House serves, Bloomfield ranks fifth on the list of crisis calls received each year. After we became more educated about this issue, we felt we needed to put this knowledge into action to help empower victims and survivors.

To that end, we launched a gift card drive for the holiday season to benefit Interval House victims and survivors. Gift cards are one of the most powerful things you can give a survivor of domestic violence, who may not have had control over their own choices and spending until now. Gift cards are also the most discreet and flexible way to help people who are actively in transition from a violent home.

Interval House is seeking the following in \$10, \$25, or \$50 increments for their clients: “anywhere” gift cards, such as VISA; “one-stop shopping” gift cards, such as Walmart or Target; grocery gift cards, such as Stop & Shop or ShopRite, drugstore gift cards such as CVS or Walgreens. You can also donate online [here](#)

Attend a Monthly BPL Social Justice Book Club

Want to learn more about social justice, but don't know where to start? Join us at BPL's Social Justice Book Club, now in its second year! Meeting monthly on the fourth Tuesday of the month, this group will seek to create a brave space for learning and sharing a variety of perspectives. This month, to learn about the topic of ageism, we will discuss *This Chair Rocks* by Ashton Applewhite on Dec. 27 at 6:30. You can register [here](#).

In our youth-obsessed culture, we're bombarded by media images and messages about the despairs and declines of our later years. Ashton Applewhite once held these beliefs too until she realized where this prejudice comes from and the damage it does. Lively, funny, and deeply researched, *This Chair Rocks* traces her journey from apprehensive boomer to pro-aging radical, and in the process debunks myth after myth about late life. Please call Prosser or McMahon Wintonbury to reserve a copy of the book, or listen to the audiobook on Hoopla.

Building and Land Use

New Kids on the Block

Director, Dennis Goderre and Assistant Director, Justin LaFountain joined the Department on November 21st and November 29th, respectively. We are excited to join your Team and meet the Council formally during the December 12th meeting. We are working to become acclimated into our positions and very pleased to say that staff, public and administration have been very accommodating, friendly and helpful during our onboarding.

Community Investment Fund

As noted in the agenda package, and further explained in drafted resolutions, staff has been working on four potential projects to bring forth for Round 2 applications. Director will be meeting with State Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to further discuss and confirm the application process. Second round applications are due by January 6, 2023.

Accessory Dwelling Units

On December 6, the Town Plan and Zoning Commission voted to recommend opting out of the Accessory Dwelling Unit statute further described in the memo provided in the Town Council agenda package for December 12, 2022.

Land Use Zoning Applications

Various land use applications are in receipt and are under review including for library bond issue projects. The Prosser Library hearing was continued for Wetlands agency review on December 12 and Town Plan and Zoning Commission on December 15. A new cannabis facility is also filed for 10 Mosey Drive.

Outreach

A meeting and tour with the owner and representatives of the Atrium Building (former Met Life Building) occurred on December 6. The Mayor joined separately, but staff discussed possible innovative ways to help provide flexibility in uses to make the space active and maximize its capacity.

Community Visioning and Plan of Conservation and Development

A kick off meeting hosted by the new Director and Assistant Director and held on November 30 with FHI Studio effectively launches this long-awaited planning and community outreach initiative for Bloomfield. Schedule details are in preparation by the consultant and the planning process will begin after January 1, 2023.

Regulatory

Staff is meeting and talking regularly about means and methods to streamline regulatory and application efficiencies. It will take time to understand what has and has not worked historically. Reviews of zoning regulations, application forms and checklists are also occurring to identify necessary updates that may make the system more user friendly and adhere to current laws, technologies and conservation approaches including promoting the use of solar power.

Human Resources

Going Strong

Let us welcome our new hires – Dennis Goderre, Director of Building and Land Use and Justin LaFountain, Assistant Director of Building and Land Use. We have also hired a Certified Police Officer who will start in January. Interviews were held for the Assistant Director of Human Resources and the Building Maintainer positions

Moving on Up

Warren Plummer is promoted to the Assistant Director of Information Technology and Innovation after he successfully served in an acting capacity during multiple vacancies of the office since October 2022.

What a Success - Coffee with a Cop

Our first Coffee with a Cop event was a huge success. We had a great turnout and all had a good time. A special thanks to the members of the Police Department for making the event successful. We would also like to thank Isaac's Bagel Café and Geissler's Supermarket for their donations.

On the Horizon

A contingent offer was made and accepted by a candidate for the Chief Technology Officer position. Similarly, a contingent offer made to a Police Officer candidate.

Information Technology and Innovation (IT)

Protecting Our Police Department

For the past few weeks, IT has been working with Atlantic Professional Services to upgrade the two Firewall units at the Police Station. This has been a much needed task, being that the current units were past their lifespan and support was no longer available. For those who were not aware, the Police Station provides an extra set of firewall units to support their complex, secure networking environment. After much planning and scheduling, IT is proud to say that the new units are installed and fully functional and are keeping our Police data environment safe from network intrusion.

Microsoft 365 on the Way

IT is currently working with managed support vendor, Novus Insight, to upgrade systems from Microsoft Office 2016 to Microsoft 365. This time consuming task is necessary to transition the Town to a modern working Microsoft Office experience. Microsoft 365 also provides added features such as security features that are required for updated versions of Munis. Stay tuned for updates on progress of the Microsoft 365 install.

Server Upgrade Project

A recent gap analysis identified eight servers in the Town environment that have outdated operating systems that require redress. IT has come up with a plan and will be working with both the Facilities and Engineering Departments on deprecating four of these servers. Two of the remaining four will be deprecated after we move forward with Microsoft 365. The remaining two servers are infrastructure based and will require additional planning and testing to update in compliance with security standards.

Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services

Athletic Field Lights Update

Geotechnical services completed environmental drilling for soil testing during the first part of November and we are currently awaiting the final results. Initial feedback appears to be positive: no environmental contaminants appear to be present. There is a substantial amount of clay beneath the top soil; however, it is a positive for the project. The clay provides a stronger base for the light poles. SLR Consultant will meet with the Building and Land Use Department to discuss permitting and site project plan with approval projected by the end of December.

Park Winterization and Preparation

The athletic lights timers at both the Rockwell Park basketball courts and pickle ball courts have been adjusted due to the end of daylight savings time. The windscreens were taken down at both the Rockwell Park pickle ball courts and the Park School Complex tennis/pickle ball courts. The playing nets at both parks will remain up throughout the winter for winter play.

Discussion between Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services and Publics Works have been had regarding ice-skating at Filley Park, specifically signage. Signage is scheduled to go up during the first full week in December.

Lisa Lane Field Drainage Project

Krause Excavating is on contract to improve on-site drainage by creating seep drains along the bottom of Lisa Lane as you enter the property and to improve field drainage from the entrance road, continuing through the fields and in to the drainage area adjacent to Route 218 State Road. While on property, the contractor was also able to address a water collection area between the neighbors' property and the Town's property allowing the water to free flow through the seep drains.

New Overhead Door and Opener at the Pool

The overhead garage door at the pool was replaced with a fiberglass door along with a new automatic opener that will be accessible by keypad and/or phone app.

Miscellaneous Pool Work

Connecticut Custom Aquatics wintered the pool separating the pump motor and cleaning out the surge pit. We will also be obtaining quotes to replace the ventilation fans in the pump room over the next few months so they can be installed and working for the 2023 season.

Winter / Spring Programs

Some of the departments' upcoming programs and events include: Holiday Workshop, Winter break Camp, Mad Science Workshops, American Red Cross Preparedness Classes, Youth Cooking Classes, Zumba, Kickboxing and more...

In addition, the Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services Department is redeveloping a youth basketball league for our young neighbors. The program will be a drop-in league for youth in grades 3-4, 5-6, & 7-8. The league will practice one day a week with games played on Saturday mornings. The program will begin during the month of January.

Working with Social & Youth Services, we have several Friday events scheduled throughout the month of December for after-school Fun Friday's program. These events include a Hot Chocolate Bar, Holiday Wreath Design, and a Winterfest event.

Light Up the Town and Holiday Parade

Held on Saturday, December 3, the parade stepped off right at 6 pm immediately followed by music on the Town Hall grounds. Music was performed by Bloomfield High School Choir and a small band ensemble. There were 15 registered units to partake in the parade. The evening concluded with Councilor Tony Harrington performing the “Christmas Song” followed with the lighting of the Town Center with the Junior Soccer Association Tiny Hawk accompanied by the Deputy Mayor and several Town Councilors. Light refreshments were provided throughout the evening.

Staff Development and Summer Staff Recruitment

The Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association (CRPA) Annual Conference was held on Monday, November 21 and Tuesday, November 22 at Mohegan Sun. Representing the department was Melissa Satchell and Shander George. At the conference both were looking to network with other state recreational professionals to explore potential programs and activities that might work in Bloomfield. Melissa also attended the monthly CRPA Camp sectional meeting.

The department also met with Human Resources (HR) to discuss the summer 2023 hiring process and retention from the summer 2022 staff. We are also working with HR to revamp our staffing evaluation process.

Public Safety (Police)

Be Observant

The Police Department recently investigated an incident from November involving a male hunting on State land adjacent to Laurel School. The activity created a large disturbance when the man, dressed in camouflage and carrying items, was seen walking on school property. Please be observant of Town buildings near open space, and report any unusual activity to the Police Department.

Celebration

The Police Department held a Promotion Ceremony on Wednesday, November 15. Jalisa Cuevas was promoted to the rank of Patrol Sergeant and Zachary O’Bright was promoted to Detective.

Did Someone Say Donuts

The first “Coffee with a Cop” was held in the morning on Tuesday, December 6 in Council Chamber at Town Hall. It went very well with many Town employees in attendance. Thank you to Human Resources for organizing the event!

Graduation

The Citizens' Police Awareness Academy graduated on Monday, November 21 with a small ceremony held in the Police Headquarters' Training Room. The fall session was a very successful class and we have received much positive feedback from the attendees. In addition, several citizens are on a waiting list for the next class, which is being planned for the fall of 2022.

Recruitments

Public Safety Chief recently offered a police officer position to a Certified Officer candidate from Georgia. An offer also extended to an entry-level police officer candidate, a graduate of the University of Maine and a commissioned officer in the United States Army.

Public Works

Capital Road Work

Public Works has performed the last phase of the pavement-resurfacing program for the season. We will start up again in the spring and are currently working on the road program for fiscal year 2024.

Solar Initiative – 330 Park Avenue

The Department has received proposals to mount solar panels on the roof of the Human Services Center building located at 330 Park Avenue. The proposals are currently being reviewed by both Public Works and the Finance Department and a recommendation will be coming soon.



Flood Mitigation and Drainage Projects

Brentwood Drive outfall: Storm drainage upgrades were completed in November on Brentwood Drive. The upgrades included adding an additional catch basin and storm drainage outlet to the brook. This will help alleviate flooding concerns in the neighborhood.

Hoskins Road culvert replacement: This culvert replacement was completed in the first week of December. Replacement of this culvert should help overtopping of the road during periods of heavy precipitation.



During Construction



Construction Complete

Congratulations

Two of the newest employees of Public Works Department, Will Mangini and Anthony Grant, have graduated from the UConn T2 Public Works Academy program. The Connecticut Public Works Academy is an introductory level training program for those Public Works staff that are new to public works and road maintenance. Course works includes professionalism and communication skills, operational safety, road fundamentals, chainsaw safety, work zone safety and flagger certification, and winter operations and safe snow plowing.



Our History

Public Works recently reinstalled the historic plaque that was previously mounted at the Vista Gardens open space located at the intersection of Duncaster Road and Adams Road. The plaque was previously mounted to a wooden post structure which was damaged by a falling tree in 2021 and had to be temporarily removed.



Senior Services

There Is No Expiration Date for Lifelong Learning

A graduation celebration for the participants of the fall 2022 Aging Mastery Program® (AMP) series will take place on Monday, December 12, at 10:30 am. Since AMP was first offered in Bloomfield five years ago, more than 100 individuals have learned how to navigate longer lives and embrace the gift of longevity.

Whole Grains, Multi-Grains, No Grains

Whole grains is the topic for the next SNAP-Ed program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education) presented by the State of Connecticut and University of St. Joseph (Friday, December 16, at 10:30 am).

New Opportunities to Learn and Grow

We all need fun and laughter in our lives. Playing games promotes wellness in mind, body and spirit, so we are going to “get the fun on” the first and third Tuesdays of each month, starting in January.

During “Mindfulness Encounters and Adventures,” participants will learn how to cope with the challenges of the day, reduce stress, and simply enjoy life by experiencing the present without being stuck in the past or worried about the future. Mindful activities bring calm, peace and happiness. This class will meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, starting in January.

Does Anyone Really Need an Excuse for a Party?

What better way to beat the winter blahs than with music and dancing and laughter and food and libations (nonalcoholic, of course)! Need a Reason? It's the New Year. The days are getting longer. It's almost Groundhog Day. It's Thursday. Or any other reason you can come up with. The senior center will be the place to be on Thursday, January 26 ("inclement weather" date is February 2).

Strategic Communications & Government Affairs

Full-Speed Ahead

This office is in the process of implementing our strategic goals, in providing open and transparent communications between the Town of Bloomfield and its neighbors. We have created some parameters in issuing media press releases for new hires, notable town events, activities and programming. In addition, we signed on with Archive Social, which connects directly to our social networks to capture and preserve all the content that the Town posts and engages with, in-context and in near-real-time. With this secure archive, we can easily manage our online communications and help the Town stay compliant with public records laws, regulations, and recordkeeping initiatives. We are currently continuing to build our Social Media accounts, including reactivating our Facebook account and the new activation of the Town's Twitter account.

In the next several weeks, our department will engage in Phase III of our plans with our website vendor Civic Plus in Design Concept and Content Development from your current website to the new, Civic Engage website. Content will be enhanced for usability and accessibility, and we will organize your website pages to make them easy to navigate.

Don't Just Talk, Say Something

As part of our newly designed website, and with our social media accounts, we are able to provide pertinent, up to date, real-time information to our neighbors, while engaging all target audiences and developing a more comprehensive messaging approach.

We are still in the process of conducting a needs assessment, developing a Communications Plan and Strategy for overall Town communications. In addition, we are in the process of providing a more strategic approach to engage our neighbors with their feedback to the Town.

Congrats on your Engagement

American Rescue of Plan Act (ARPA) Community Outreach Committee

We are assisting the ARPA Community Outreach Committee with their community engagement efforts by organizing and supporting various public forums with the public and business community.

The Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD), Community Visioning with FHI Studio Consultants

The Community Visioning process will develop a strategic vision for Bloomfield, engage residents in a discussion regarding what they value most about Bloomfield through robust community engagement and establish a brand and identity for Bloomfield.

YWCA 50/50 Campaign, Ongoing Public Awareness

This public awareness campaign has been designed to advance the recruitment, appointment and retention of people of color and those who identify as women on local boards and commissions. This office has identified three boards that will be a part of the overall study with the YWCA to increase civic participation, focus efforts on policy reform, processes and practices, educate community members on the roles, authority and impact of boards and commissions on their community.

Get on Board

The Office of Strategic Communications and Government Affairs is also responsible for organizing and coordinating citizen engagement, community outreach and public relations for various Town Boards and Commissions.

We are finalizing our Boards and Commissions Manual, policies and procedures to provide a more cohesive uniform approach to the administrative support for all Boards and Commissions. The department is in the process of revamping webpages for all Boards and Commissions to reflect these new changes.

Very truly yours,

Stanley D Hawthorne

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