



*Office of the
Town Manager*
TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD
800 BLOOMFIELD AVENUE
BLOOMFIELD, CT 06002
Tel: 860-769-3504
Fax 860-242-2965

July 9, 2022

Good day Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councilors,

Here are the latest updates from the Community Building Leadership Team (CBLT) including topical subjects and departmental reported updates and issues.

IMPROVEMENTS TO TOWN LIBRARIES PROJECT CHALLENGE

The 21,840 square foot Prosser Library was built in 1965. It is partially located in a flood plain and has flooded several times in recent years including my witness to such flooded conditions within the first week of my tenure as Town Manager of Bloomfield when services had to be closed to our neighbors for an extended period.

McMahon Wintonbury Library, built in 1972, has 6,023 square feet and is a neighborhood hub that provides services to nearby (and beyond) residents.

Both buildings have outgrown their size, have outdated electrical, ventilation and technology systems and are not conducive to providing 21st century library services.

Bond funding in the amount of \$29,255,000 for the Bloomfield Public Library building project consisting of improvements to the Town's main and branch libraries was approved in the municipal election held on November 2, 2021. Of the 3265 votes cast, 2716 voters supported the initiative representing 83% of ballots cast.

Today, July 9, 2022, as I write to the Town Council, the project faces a major challenge due to negative effects of the economy largely the result of impacts caused by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic inclusive of supply chain and inflationary pressures.

The common metrics of accountability for major construction projects are budget and time. During this current volatile period of negative economic pressures, estimated costs of the project already exceed the budget by more than \$5 million, typical of construction projects in the current economic environment.

Through value engineering assessments facilitated by the Library Building Committee with industry experts, cost reductions to the project have been identified to realign project costs to the budget that also include a reduction in the square footage of the new Prosser Library Building by 2805 square feet.

Supplemental funding considerations such as through new grant application sources, particularly for restoring the square footage reduction, would delay the project. A delay from the projected construction start date of January 2023 to June 2023 could result in an estimated \$2.7 million overage after value engineering reductions have been applied.

Given the commitment that has been previously made to improve Town libraries and the overwhelming endorsement by the electorate of Bloomfield last November at a level of 83% support with the project now challenged by the unanticipated negative impacts of the national economy, I believe that it is necessary for the Town Council to take appropriate action to ensure adequate sizing of the main library facility while mitigating future escalating costs that could place additional tax burden on the neighbors of Bloomfield potentially for a lesser project.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA) FUNDS

Since the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic hit the United States around the beginning of 2020, there have been a multitude of federal relief programs starting with the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act passed by Congress on March 25, 2020. It allotted \$2.2 trillion to provide fast and direct economic assistance for American workers, families, small businesses, and industries. However, direct aid to local governments for potential fiscal imbalances became political and were omitted from CARES.

On March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law. It was a \$1.9 trillion package intended to combat the pandemic, including public health and economic impacts. A fractional portion of ARPA was allotted for state and local governments (unlike CARES) including for any fiscal imbalances caused to municipal entities by the pandemic based on a federal derived formula.

While we most often refer to these funds intended specifically for state and local governments as ARPA, it misrepresents the total magnitude of ARPA whose allotment of \$1.9 trillion is far broader in scope and funding than the portion specified for state and local governments more than one year into the pandemic.

Of the \$1.9 trillion funded in ARPA, \$362 billion was allocated to state and local governments through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF). Of the \$362 billion assigned for state and local governments, only \$130 billion was assigned to local governments.

Of the remaining \$1.9 trillion ARPA funds, \$656 billion is provided in direct financial assistance to American individuals and businesses such as for stimulus checks, unemployment, the paycheck protection program for small businesses, tax credits, etc.; an additional \$211 billion is provided for education and childcare programs; an added \$86 billion is for public health programs; an additional \$56 billion is for assistance to individuals and families; an additional \$40 billion is for transportation programs; and another \$61 billion in other programs is provided such as for disaster and flooding relief and emergency food and shelter.

CORONAVIRUS STATE AND LOCAL FISCAL RECOVERY FUNDS (SLFRF)

From the federal derived formula through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF), the Town of Bloomfield received \$6.28 million in funding.

With emphasis, while ARPA/SLFRF gives wide latitude to each local government for various ARPA purposes identified above, SLFRF funds were provided to state and local governments to help remedy the disparity between rising costs and falling revenue to the local government entity caused by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Local government recipients may use its SLFRF funds to replace lost public sector revenue to provide government services (also interpreted as revenue sources reduced or offset by escalating costs due to the pandemic; respond to negative economic impacts of the pandemic; respond to public health issues; provide premium pay for essential workers; and invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

In our outreach to the Bloomfield community over the past year plus to the current date, it has included published information, public presentations, public meetings including numerous Town Council subcommittee and regular meetings, multiple budget workshops including a public hearing, and the Annual Town Meeting wherein ARPA/SLFRF appropriations proposed for usage by the Town of Bloomfield were informationally transparent and used to educate our neighbors.

Further engagement with Bloomfield neighbors has been continuous since the ARPA Community Engagement Plan was formally adopted by the Town Council on April 11, 2022. The Engagement Plan Survey was mailed to every household and business address in Bloomfield (approximately 8000).

The questions contained within the survey used the precise language provided by the U.S. Department of the Treasury on how the funds must be used within its guideline parameters, as ultimately to be decided by the local governing body, the Town Council.

As of July 5, 2022, we have collected 391 neighbor responses to the multiple choice portion of the survey questions and nearly 500 written narrative commentaries including 236 written responses from neighbors on how the ARPA/SLFRF funds can be used to help the Town of Bloomfield. I am attaching those responses as a pdf document within the email transmission of this report.

The survey response rate at this time is nearly 400 or 5% of households and businesses who were mailed the engagement survey. From my research: “As a very rough rule of thumb, 200 responses will provide fairly good survey accuracy under most assumptions and parameters of a survey project.”

Further, high survey response rates are likely driven by high levels of motivation to complete the survey, or a strong personal relationship between business and customer. Survey response rates in the 5% to 30% range are typical.

We are regularly disappointed by low turnout and participation of the public such as in exercising one's right to vote on public issues. Bloomfield's voter turnout percentage last November was only 26.3% of registered voters. Even worse, the voter turnout percentage this past April was only 10%.

Of our statistically valid responses to date, seventy two per cent (72%) of survey respondents would support spending the unallocated ARPA funds on government services. Seventy four per cent of respondents would support spending the unallocated ARPA funds on negative economic impacts.

Broken down further by demographic statistics, 73% of white respondents compared to 76% of black respondents support spending ARPA funds on government services. And 74% of white respondents compared to 79% of black respondents support spending ARPA funds on negative economic impacts.

Due to the unpredicted circumstances of the economy and its subsequent adverse impact on this exceptionally well supported and endorsed community investment project, I would ask the Town Council to consider expediting the final phases of the ARPA Engagement Plan.

The final pre-decision phase (phase 4 of 5) requires "to identify a set of tentative prioritized solutions focused on remediating identified COVID-19 impacts and develop tentative spending plan."

Given the circumstances and facts heretofore described, as Town Manager, I am ok with the Prosser Library as the prioritized solution. However, if there are other specific priorities that Town Councilors want to name, I would encourage that they be named, described, and submitted as soon as possible, perhaps even at the July 11 Town Council Regular Meeting.

The final phase (Phase 5) simply states: "In a transparent fashion, the Town will take responsibility for recommending the best, most strategic and impactful uses of American Rescue Plan Act funds including but not limited to the annual budget cycle and adopt a spend plan and make available. This requirement has been fulfilled for the initial allocation of \$4.6 million.

For most of the remaining balance of ARPA/SLFRF funds, I am requesting that Prosser Library Square Footage Restoration be favorably acted upon at a cost of \$1.5 million for consideration as a "tentative prioritized solution," in accordance with the Adopted ARPA Engagement Plan, and in the form of the resolution that has been submitted as part of the July 11 Regular Agenda that would require a public hearing prior to final approval.

DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES

Finance

Changes in Telecommunications

When Frontier purchased SNET from ATT in 2013 for \$ 2 billion, many in the telecommunications space were unsure if Frontier really knew what they were purchasing.

The Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) of the past was largely seen as a dying business and ATT retained control of many of the valuable contracts and services. Most see what happened after this acquisition as a blunder and Frontier filed for bankruptcy in 2020.

However, Frontier has emerged from Chapter 11 in 2021 with fresh investors, and a new logo, and has made strategic investments in fiber optic technology. Bloomfield has seen this benefit as an increase in competition in the high speed internet market. This competition has driven prices down while connection speeds have gone up and Bloomfield residents truly have options, whether that's GoNetSpeed, Frontier, or Comcast, and have the ability to vote with their pocket book.

The Federal Communications Commission ordered [19-72A1](#) in August 2019, which has allowed telecommunications carriers the flexibility to abandon older copper based services and allows for a transition to newer technologies for mission critical applications.

As a result of this action, Windstream Enterprise notified the Town of their intent to remove themselves from the POTS phone business. The Town has seen this as an opportunity to review our telecommunications business practice.

One such update will be that each of our 5 polling places will now have dedicated cellular phones supporting voting activities. This change will increase the flexibility and resiliency of this important line of communication during voting.

In the coming weeks, the Town will be transitioning from Windstream to Frontier for its digital interface for all of our phones. The Primary Rate Interface (PRI) in use allows for incoming and outgoing calling for Town and Emergency Operations.

The Town's IT Division is using this opportunity to make the phone system more resilient by building in redundancy, all while reducing cost.

Additionally this configuration will be helping with the upcoming library building projects by allowing us to control the main phone numbers for the Prosser and McMahan Wintonbury Libraries.

In this upcoming fiscal year, the Town will be making strategic investments in telecommunications infrastructure. We will be updating our connection to the phone carriers as detailed above, upgrading our core phone systems capabilities, and converting to newer handsets in Town Hall and at the Police Department. These initiatives will ensure that lines of communication stay open.

The Price for Ice

Although it is still summer, contracts for the upcoming winter season are being established. The Town participates in a regional cooperative bid through the Capital Region Council of Governments for treated road salt, which keeps our streets clear and safe during snow and ice events.

Recent bid results follow the same inflationary trend we are seeing across the board for commodities and services. The bid price for treated road salt for this season is \$94.83 per ton, up from \$68.17 per ton last year. Based on the Town's usage, treated road salt will cost \$180,183 for the season, against a budgeted amount of \$122,706 leaving a shortfall of \$57,477.

Library Bloomfield Public Library (BPL)

Youth Meals Available This Summer

BPL is participating in the Bloomfield Schools Summer Food Service program. Join us on Mondays through Saturdays for FREE lunch for all youth at McMahan Wintonbury, 1015 Blue Hills Ave, 11:30AM - 12:30PM. This program is open to anyone ages 18 and younger. You do not need to be a resident to receive a free meal.

Additional sites include breakfast and lunch Monday through Friday: Carmen Arace School, 390 Park Ave, Breakfast 9:15-9:30AM, Lunch 11-11:30AM. Bloomfield High School, 5 Huckleberry Lane, Breakfast 7:50-8:15AM, Lunch 12:15-12:30PM. All youth ages 18 and younger are welcome at any site.

Intellectual Freedom: Freedom to Read

Intellectual freedom is the right of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction. CT libraries continue to receive requests to censor information, including BPL, and as was seen in the news this month, Colchester Public Library and Coventry Public Library. BPL, in accordance with its [Social Justice Mission Statement](#), believes it is essential that library resources, both physical and digital, remain free to use for all. You can read BPL's [Intellectual Freedom and Censorship Policy](#) in full at bplct.org.

The BPL Board of Trustees voted to endorse the [CT Library Association Intellectual Freedom Statement Against Censorship](#) at their March 8, 2022 meeting. As the Statement reads: "Recently, organized attacks have targeted library materials and programs by BIPOC, LBGTQ+, and Jewish authors that address race, racism, enslavement, history, sexuality, gender identity and expression, bigotry, and antisemitism. This is a callous systemic erasure to undermine and eliminate the diversity of thought and experiences that reflect the BIPOC, LBGTQ+, and Jewish communities. These assaults of intimidation threaten the livelihood and safety of authors, library workers, educators, and board members. CLA vehemently condemns these acts of censorship and intimidation." BPL will continue to hold strong against these attacks.

BPL Program Highlight: "CHAD" From the Bloomfield Messenger: Author Talk

On Thursday, July 14 at 10:30AM, Kimarley Henry, writer and illustrator of the "CHAD" comic in the Bloomfield Messenger/Windsor Journal will be providing a virtual author talk. He will also talk about the process of writing and illustrating his book CHAD Against the World, allowing time for Q & A. For children. Register at bplct.org.

Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Services

Athletic Field Lights

We are currently in the process of working with SLR Consulting to prepare the data collection, geotechnical investigation, develop the bid documents, regulatory permitting, bid assistance, and construction administration for the project. We will continue to work with SLR over the next several weeks to gather all of the necessary information with the plan of releasing the bid package during the fall of 2022.

Farmington River Park House Demolition Project

The Purchase Order for this project has been issued and a soft timeline has been obtained. Asbestos abatement is scheduled to take place beginning on August 1 followed by permitting and house demolition by the end of August.

Rockwell Park Master Plan

We are at the final steps of reviewing the three park concept options with a request submitted to review at either the upcoming Administration and Education or Land Use and Economic Development Subcommittees to introduce for comments and suggestions prior to developing the final concept park plan.

Street Banners

The new street banners have been ordered and are on schedule to have the new fall banners ready to be displayed in late August or early September.

LaSalette Barn Work

Moore's Construction has been selected to handle the roof replacement and carpentry work on Barn B at LaSalette Park. The work has been scheduled to begin during the week of July 11, 2022 and should be completed within two weeks of the start date.

Lisa Lane Drainage Project

The Department of Agriculture grant for the Lisa Lane Drainage project is currently in the works. The grant has been signed and provided to the State of CT. Ironwood Community Partners, David Melesko, and Wetlands Agent / Engineer Peter Castaldi have reviewed the drainage plans with some modifications needed. The group will reconvene within a week or two

to finalize the project. Once finalized we will begin to obtain quotes with the work to start and be completed this fall.

Summer Concerts

The Summer Concerts program on the Town Green began on Thursday, June 23 with Still Kicking and the Big City Horns, followed by June 30 Nightshift Band and July 7 Mass-Conn-Fusion. Attendance has been strong with approximately 200+ to 300+ in attendance. The upcoming July 14 performance will be Shaded Soul who is always a fan favorite.

Summer Programs

The pool opened open for preseason on Monday, June 20 followed by the regular season on Monday, June 27. We are off to a great start with both the open swim programs, as well as the learn to swim programs. We will be hosting a Dive-In-Movie, “Sing 2” on Saturday, July 9 beginning at 8:30 pm.

Summer Camps are up and running with all programs at full capacity. Youth varying from age 5-15 are enjoying daily activities which include swimming, field trips, arts & crafts, specialized programming, and more. The camp day operates from 7:30am – 5:30pm with breakfast and lunch provided as part of the Federal school lunch program coordinated by the Bloomfield Board of Education.

Police

Community Investment Action Items

We are still waiting on delivery of our body worn cameras as part of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Community Investment Plan (CIP) Budget. The system infrastructure, including system server and communication equipment has been installed or is on site, but the actual body cameras are delayed due to production issues. We expect them within the next 2 weeks.

We have begun the process of reviewing and organizing our in-car video platforms now that the FY 2023 CIP Budget year has begun, and anticipate completing purchasing orders in the next 30 days.

The architects conducting the needs assessment as part of the Comprehensive Plan of Development and the Police Department’s Community Investment Project from 2021 have been busy meeting with Town Government representatives, and have completed a detailed walk though of the facility. They will be continuing to meet with stakeholders to gather information regarding department and community needs associated with our facility, and we will be working with them over the next two months to help coordinate their assessment.

We are also working on State and Federal grant applications for technology based items. Among these are camera technology and training and meeting space technology. Information has been slow, and there is no useful update at this point.

Senior Services

30-Passenger Minibus

We hope to receive an update on the delivery of the 30-passenger minibus within the next several weeks. We appreciate the allocation of \$40,000 to cover increased costs due to supply chain issues. The minibus service is vital to so many of our neighbors in helping them maintain their independence and dignity by providing transportation for the activities of daily living.

Minibus Assistant

The incumbent part-time minibus assistant resigned to take a job in the private sector. During the budget process, approval was given to make this position fulltime, and we are currently working with human resources to seek out qualified candidates. There will be a two-week internal posting, after which it will be shifted to an external/internal posting, if necessary.

FoodShare Tuesdays

We are looking for help with every-other-Tuesday FoodShare distributions during the summer months, as the high school students who participate during the regular school year are not available. (This month's dates are July 12 and 26.) Time is 12:45-1:30 pm, and volunteers are asked to be at the human services center at 12:35 pm. A special shout-out thanks to town staff Dawn Cooper-Grodger, Nancy Haynes, Sharron Howe, Melissa Satchell and Scott Sharlow, and to Deputy Mayor Greg Davis for their assistance during last month's distributions, when the early summer heat made the parking lot feel like the tropics.

Let's Get This Party Started! Pre-Juneteenth Celebration

COVID-19 has been so disruptive for so long, that residents were more than ready for a party last month, as evidenced by the sellout for the Senior Services 2nd Annual Pre-Juneteenth Celebration. Plans are already underway for next year's event.

Multi-Media Drawing & Exploration Exhibit

Artwork created by Dolores Howard's Tuesday afternoon art class is on display at the human services center through the end of the month. It is well worth the trip to stop in and look at these beautiful pieces. We are looking forward to moving the exhibits back to town hall when conditions allow.

Loads of Love Laundry Pilot Program

There are still two days (Tuesdays, July 19 and August 16) available for Bloomfield seniors to take advantage of this free laundry washing service. Minibus transportation is available for anyone who needs a ride. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 860-576-8630 to schedule a time, and 860-243-8364 for a ride.

Covid-19 Booster Clinics

The latest news reports indicate that we haven't yet seen the end of COVID-19, and there are indications cases will increase once again over the next several months. We are partnering with the West Hartford-Bloomfield Health District to present booster shot clinics at the human services center from 11:00 am - 12:30 pm on Tuesdays, July 12 and August 2. Times have been adjusted from previous clinics in an effort to accommodate those who might want to come in during their lunch hours. Both Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are available. No appointments are necessary.

Social & Youth Services

Operation Fuel

Beginning July 11th, Operation Fuel will provide financial assistance with utility and water bills, as well as oil deliveries. Contact our office to determine your eligibility.

Summer Camp Financial Assistance

Social & Youth Services is now accepting applications for financial assistance for summer camps with Leisure Services. Please contact Social & Youth Services at 860-242-1895 to apply.

Now Hiring

Social & Youth Services continues to accept applications for part-time Youth & Family Worker. All postings are listed on the Town's website.

Town Clerk

Primary Election Notices

Notice is hereby given that a Primary of the Democratic Party will be held in your town on August 9, 2022 for nomination to each office indicated below.

Notice is also hereby given that the following are the names of the party-endorsed candidates, if any, for nomination to each office indicated, together with the street address of said candidate.

The party endorsed candidates, if any, are indicated by an asterisk.

Additionally, the following are the names of all other candidates who have filed their certificates of eligibility and consent to primary or have satisfied the primary petitioning requirements in conformity with the General Statutes as candidates for nomination to each office indicated, together with the street addresses of said candidates.

OFFICE	CANDIDATE	ADDRESS
Secretary of the State	*Stephanie Thomas	81 William St., Norwalk, CT 06851
	Maritza Bond	784 Quinpiac Ave., New Haven, CT 06513
Treasurer	*Erick Russell	215 Stevenson Rd., New Haven, CT 06515
	Dita Bhargava	502 Cognewaugh Rd., Greenwich, CT 06807
	Karen DuBois-Walton	58 Pearl St., New Haven, CT 06513
Judge of Probate	*Dan Mara	193 Duncaster Rd., Bloomfield, CT 06002
	Keith Yagaloff	125 Depot St., East Windsor, CT 06096
Registrar of Voters	*Jennifer Marshall-Nealy	57 Cliffmount Drive, Bloomfield, CT 06002
	Troy Mitchell	21 Burnwood Dr. Bloomfield, CT 06002

Notice is hereby given that a Primary of the Republican Party will be held in your town on August 9, 2022 for nomination to each office indicated below.

Notice is also hereby given that the following are the names of the party-endorsed candidates, if any, for nomination to each office indicated, together with the street address of said candidate.

The party endorsed candidates, if any, are indicated by an asterisk.

Additionally, the following are the names of all other candidates who have filed their certificates of eligibility and consent to primary or have satisfied the primary petitioning requirements in conformity with the General Statutes as candidates for nomination to each office indicated, together with the street addresses of said candidates.

OFFICE	CANDIDATE	ADDRESS
United States Senator	*Themis Klarides	66 Governors Way, Madison, CT 06443
	Leora R. Levy	59 Peckslan Rd., Greenwich, CT 06831
	Peter Lumaj	745 Mill Plain Rd., Fairfield, CT 06824
Secretary of the State	*Dominic Rapini	4 Mariners Way, Branford, CT 06405
	Brock Weber	17 Lancewood Ln., Wolcott, CT 06716
	Terrie E. Wood	50 Saint Nicholas Rd., Darien, CT 06820

Dated at Hartford, Connecticut this 27^h day of June 2022

Denise W. Merrill
Secretary of the State

The foregoing is a copy of the notice which I have received from the Office of the Secretary of the State, in accordance with Section 9-433 of the General Statutes. As provided in said notice, a primary of the referenced party for nomination to the state or district offices where specified will be held on August 9, 2022.

The hours of voting at said primaries and the location of the polls will be as follows;
The polls will be open between the hours of 6:00 AM and 8:00 PM and electors will cast their votes at the following places in the districts specified.

<u>District</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Address</u>
District I	Leisure Services Gym	330 Park Avenue
District II	Bloomfield High School	5 Huckleberry Lane
District III	Carmen Arace School	390 Park Avenue
District IV	Metacomet School	185 School Street
District V	Laurel School	1 Filley Street

Absentee ballots will be available, as provided by law, in the office of the Town Clerk. Central counting of absentee ballots will take place at Town Hall, 800 Bloomfield Avenue, Bloomfield, Connecticut.

Very truly yours,

Stanley D Hawthorne

Town Manager
Town of Bloomfield
800 Bloomfield Avenue
Bloomfield, CT 06002
(860) 769-3504