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Easy Sunday Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councilors,

Here are the latest updates from the Community Building Leadership Team (CBLT) including topical subjects and departmental reported issues, as an attachment document also.

At this past Wednesday's CBLT meeting, I introduced six budget themes that will be integrated as the thesis from my inaugural six months of study and assessment of Bloomfield and next steps for building better community. I'd like to share those six (including brief introductions below) with Town Council in this Biweekly Report although there could be other priority topics added by the formal budget presentation: they are (1) Strategic Planning; (2) Organizational Realignment; (3) Community Investment Plan (CIP); (4) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI); (5) Workforce Development; and (6) Strategic Communications. I will present related budget modifications or funding requests as a part of the Town Manager's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2023.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

*"Strategic planning is a process in which organizational leaders determine their vision for the future as well as identify their goals and objectives for the organization. The process also includes establishing the sequence in which those goals should fall so that the organization is enabled to reach its stated vision."*

Last January (2021), the Town Council held a two day retreat. Out of those sessions facilitated by a consulting firm, Manifest Maximum, the then Council through Facilitator Joseph Seymour III developed a 2021 Strategic Planning Session Summary, which I've attached to this report. I've also enclosed below the links of the two retreat sessions:

Town Council 2021 Retreat Day 1 <https://youtu.be/Wva9GEuX4o8>

Town Council 2021 Retreat Day 2 <https://youtu.be/eXAHZ0mKLDg>

### **2021 Strategic Priority - Become a Strategic Organization:**

*Implement five-year strategic plans*

*Institute yearly review meetings to monitor progress*

*Invest in Strategic Planning/Leadership Training*

*Select a Strategy Planning Model and deploy across organization*

### **2021 Strategic Priority – Focused Economic Development:**

*Identify and pursue COVID-based economic development opportunities/funding*

*Expand relationship with University of Hartford*

*Improve process of discovering and vetting potential economic development opportunities*

As a candidate for Town Manager, last summer, I watched the deliberations and found the results of the retreat as interest stimulating to join this organization, as its chief administrative officer. However, with a new Town Council elected this past November including four new members, I believe it is critical to understand any changes to the strategy path.

The Town Manager's Office has reached out to Manifest Maximum and we hope to soon plan a 2022 Strategic Planning Retreat with the Town Council.

For long term strategic planning including setting a community vision with termed strategic and business plans to measure progress, we are in the final stage of developing the Request for Proposal for Bloomfield's Visioning Plan and Plan of Conservation and Development.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL REALIGNMENT**

*“Organizational Realignment is the process of changing the way a company does business. ... It is the responsibility of the leadership to make sure that the various parts of the organization are aligned for it to function properly.”*

Included as an action item on the January 24, 2022 Town Council Meeting is Adoption of Schedule – Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Meetings. At the first budget meeting on March 10, 2022, and during subsequent budget review meetings with departments, we will begin those sessions with an overview of the current community and organizational-wide chart followed by individual departmental structures featuring functions and resources.

Over the course of budget review, I will present my recommendations for realigning and retooling the organization for building more effective and responsive community services. It will also be necessary to define and codify all other departments not specifically listed in the Town Charter, as prescribed by the Town Charter.

### **COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PLAN (CIP)**

*“The Community Investment Plan (CIP) is a planning tool used to document proposed major capital investments projected to take place over a five year period.”*

In Chapter IX, Finance and Taxation, of the Town Charter, provision is made for an itemized five year capital budget, the first year of which shall be included in the town manager's proposed budget. It should also include a list of all capital improvements and other capital expenditures which are proposed to be undertaken during the five fiscal years next ensuing.

In the past, we have met this minimum requirement of our Charter; however, as I began administrative review of capital projects just over a week ago, I realized that we have not performed as complete of a job as we could to more sufficiently inform the Town Council and the community of needed intermediate term projects and services, as assessed by departmental experts. Neither have we succinctly educated on funding opportunities and challenges nor solicited adequate community feedback.

To address some of these shortcomings in quick order, I have formed a Capital Projects Taskforce to develop an enhanced review and presentation of five year capital projects to the Bloomfield Council and Community. In time, the five year capital improvements program should mature into a Community Investment Plan addressing long term capital projects and human services needs of the community.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) STUDY**

*“Comprehensive study focusing on diversity in the Town of Bloomfield’s workforce and the Town’s commodities and services chain. The outcome of this study and recommendations are designed to provide Town leaders and residents with a path toward a more inclusive and dynamic town that will benefit residents.”*

An equity assessment program was discussed as needed for the Town at the Town Council’s 2021 Retreat. Specifically, Town Councilors identified a lack of diversity in organizational resources.

**2021 Strategic Priority – Protecting and Promoting our Diversity:**

- Increase diversity on various boards/commissions*
- Increase diversity in mid-level management roles*
- Develop policies that protect and promote diversity*
- Adopt an expanded DEI focus*

In the Fiscal Year 2022 Adopted Budget, the Council appropriated funds for an equity assessment policy and data collection initiative. While this budget initiative is off to an apologetic late start, we are finalizing the Request for Proposals release with the scope of services, as described below:

*DEI Scope of Services:*

*The successful proposer (proposer) will conduct a study and an analysis of the Town of Bloomfield’s human resources and projects, commodities and services supply chain functions to document the current utilization of diverse employees at all levels within the Town’s workforce, and utilization of diverse resources and vendors within the Town’s supply chain.*

*Proposer will analyze the role employees have in implementing policies and examine formalized and informal processes which have become institutionalized practices that may interfere with effective policies and goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Proposer will review human resource and procurement operations for examining organizational culture in helping to assess performance and ability to reach strategic outcomes of the organization.*

*Proposer will involve Town leaders, employees, suppliers, service providers, neighbors, and representatives from local businesses and corporations to generate ideas for improving diversity in human and procurement resources of the Town with a goal to generate as many ideas from stakeholders as possible for consideration of policy change necessary to meet strategic goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

*Proposer will identify recommended pilot programs prior to full implementation of proposer’s recommendations for testing assumptions about policy options before the adoption and execution of new or amended policies. Following adoption of new or amended policies recommended by the proposer, policies’ execution will be monitored for at least a year under the guidance and direction of proposer including the establishment of performance benchmarks.*

Regrettably, there’s low hanging fruit in our assessment of diversity, equity, and inclusion, some of which I feel compelled to bring to Council’s attention and requiring at least the start of redress as a part of the Fiscal Year 2023 Budget. The Town Council should expect a high priority budget modification to begin to address internal inequity within the organization.

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (WDP)**

*“Workforce Development Plan (WDP) is an assessment of the knowledge and skills of the current workforce linked to the anticipated knowledge and skills of the future workforce to best meet agency goals and objectives. ... The WDPs would identify knowledge and skill gaps between the current workforce and future needs.”*

This strategic priority was well scoped and described during the 2021 Town Council Retreat. If the current Council confirms, the Town Manager intends to recommend appropriate budget modifications to begin developing such a plan:

**2021 Strategic Priority - Adopt Data-Driven Decision Making:**

*Create a consistent process for decision-making and embed a requirement for supportive data  
Train staff on accessing, analyzing and utilizing data  
Research and invest in an in-house robust data-management system*

**2021 Strategic Priority - Improve Project Management:**

*Invest in a permanent full-time Project Manager  
Provide training for all staff in Project Management methodology  
Prioritize Project Management skills and experience in future hiring*

**2021 Strategic Priority - Modernize Workforce:**

*Conduct a complete workforce audit  
Determine KSA's (knowledge, skills, and abilities) for each position; Assess current workforce; Identify skills gaps  
Invest in a Learning Management System (LMS) to provide online learning and development opportunities  
Transition HR (human resources) from an administrative focus to a strategic and organizational development focus*

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

*“Strategic Communications requires the following: identify the audience [to whom do we need to communicate?]; determine the goals and objectives [why communicate?]; develop key messages [what do we need to communicate?]; develop tactical plan [how will we communicate, to whom and when?]; identify measures of evaluation [how will we know if we are successful?].”*

Once again, this strategic priority was well described during the 2021 Town Council Retreat. If the current Council confirms, the Town Manager intends to recommend appropriate budget modifications to begin developing such a plan:

**2021 Strategic Priority – Publicity, Marketing, Communication:**

*Improve communication with citizens  
Develop regional/national marketing plan  
Develop social media marketing plan  
Define and promote the Town of Bloomfield brand*

**DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES**

**Public Works**

- Winter Operations - we have had 10 actionable events so far this season which is slightly more than average. A typical season has 15-20 total events.
- We continue to experience staff impacts from COVID-19. Between COVID, workers’ compensation and vacancies, the department is down 8 employees.
- The department has an ample supply of cloth masks and small bottles of sanitizer which were donated to the Town by Cigna in the fall.

- Public Works is monitoring the ice at Filley Pond and will open up for skating when the ice thickness is safe.
- Work on the floors and chiller replacement at Town Hall continues.
- The Department was notified that we have passed our reaccreditation review by the American Public Works Association (APWA). The Department is still the only department in the state of Connecticut to achieve same.

### **Bloomfield Public Library (BPL)**

After a successful pilot project in 2021, BPL rolled out a digital Program Feedback Form for all programs as of January 1, 2022. The goals for using this form are to better inform programming staff and ultimately to provide better service to our public.

Our Program Feedback Form pilot project included 95 responses with 95.7% of respondents rating the programs 5 or 6 (out of 6). Most of the responses about how to improve programs included many things out of our hands (for example, better operas chosen by the Met), in-person program suggestions, and longer time allotted for programs. The best days/times of the week align with what we are already offering, weekday afternoons and evenings (granted, these are folks already at the programs during this time). The additional topics are what we are currently exploring and adding to our spring and summer programming lineup. 17% of respondents learned about the program from a library staff member or word of mouth and 44% from our email newsletter.

Last fiscal year, we held 537 programs with 11,361 participants.

### **Finance/Information Systems and Technology/Purchasing and Risk Management**

#### **Purchasing:**

- Placed order for 7,560 COVID-19 home test kits.
- Issued American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Consultant Request for Proposal.
- HVAC (heating, ventilating, and air –conditioning) services contract executed.
- Extended on-call engineering contracts.
- Reviewed pricing proposal for Police body worn cameras for compliance with contract.

#### **Risk Management**

- Completed and entered 2023 insurance budget in Munis.
- Liability claims through December 2021: 15 open current and prior year claims, \$394,918 paid out by insurer to date. 4 claims closed year to date, \$43,083 paid out by insurer.
- Workers' Compensation 21 open current and prior year claims, \$329,313 paid out to date. 28 claims closed year to date, \$225,121 in payments.

#### **Information Systems and Technology (IST)**

- IST added Deputy Director Bob Platosz to staff. Bob has already been making an impact working on technology infrastructure projects and Microsoft Windows Group Policy changes. We will be doing site visits in coming week to get Bob acquainted with the environment.
- Organization Charts: Preparing standardized organization charts for each department and converting to Microsoft Visio. Setup a network folder in the Town Hall share where the submissions are stored and each department can track the progress. This share is open to all departments to review. Each department has been asked to provide department positions and core competencies.
- Zoom Hybrid Meeting Setup: Date/time for test hybrid webinar to be determined. Video and audio interconnects with BATV (Bloomfield Access Television) are connected. Continuing to

troubleshoot and maintain new and existing hardware. Replaced a component in Council Chamber (CC) to fix dependability issue. There is still an intermittent issue with one of the monitors in CC. IST is setting up an equipment test to isolate the issue. Conference Room 3 (CR3) and Conference Room 5 (CR5) are operational but CR5 offline due to boiler room work. May want to add additional wireless microphones to CR5 and CC in future depending on test and add vendor support agreement for hardware and software support.

- Code Red Non-Emergency Notifications: Looking for ways to better highlight this service to the public and have town departments better utilize. Training was provided by Police Department to department heads on 2/2021 but follow up is needed. Collecting the materials they used for the zoom briefing/training they've given and will provide a CBLT update.
- Website Update: Continuing to review, modify and update existing content on Town website. New updated Social and Youth Services custom sub-site to go live in February. Other departments can opt for custom websites as well. Reviewed area town's websites for ideas to present at meeting scheduled for 2/1. Will need to collect photos and content for updated site. Some statistics from our existing website on where people visit most often: Human Resources Job Postings(4%), Assessor's Department (3.9%), Tax Collector Department (pay taxes)(3.5%), Generic Department page (3%), Trash and Recycling (1.8%), Town Council(1.6%), and Police Department (Arrest Log) (1.4%). Reviewing our logs to highlight these areas in a "Citizen Action Center" on our new site.

## Senior Services

- 6-week Folk Dancing class begins Monday, January 24 (10:30-11:30 am)
- Retirement reception for Helen Drohan, RN, from 10:00-11:30 am on Tuesday, January 25.
- AARP Tax Aide volunteers plan to offer federal and state income tax return preparation from February 2 through April 13.
- We are partnering with Connecticut Healthy Living Collective and Central CT State University to offer a 4-week (8-session) "A Matter of Balance" class beginning February 7<sup>th</sup>.

## Leisure Services

- The main pool filter is scheduled to be repaired. The repair work includes a total internal rebuild replacing the filtration fingers/tentacles. The fingers/tentacles have begun to breakdown and as a result DE (Diatomaceous Earth) has begun to penetrate the filters and work itself into the pool. This does not create a safety hazard but it does create a water clarity problem.
- The pool splash pad bids have been received with four vendors submitting proposals. The proposal prices vary between \$466,250 and \$534,250. We are currently in the process of completing reference checks and will have a preferred vendor recommendation to the Purchasing Manager no later than Friday, January 21, 2022.
- The Rockwell Park Planning scope of work request for quotes has been released and provided to several planning firms. The quotes are due by the end of the day on Wednesday, January 19, 2022. Mayor Wong has developed a six person Rockwell Park Planning Team Committee to work on this project with the Director of Leisure Services. The planning firm to work on this project will be selected by early to mid-February.
- Working with the Board of Education (BOE), an after-school grant is currently being worked on by BOE Grant Writer and will be submitted within the next week or two. If awarded, the program is



scheduled to kick-off during the week of April 4, 2022 and will continue through the 2022/2023 school year. This program will serve up to (75) seventh & eighth graders.

- Continuing with our successful “Nature Lecture Services” which is co-sponsored by the Leisure Services Department and Wintonbury Land Trust, we hosted our first lecture of the year on Wednesday, January 5, 2022. The presentation was on Fisher’s presented by the State of Connecticut. The next presentation is scheduled for Wednesday, February 2, 2022 with the topic of Bald Eagle Recovery Story conducted by State-certified Master Wildlife Conservationist and Bald Eagle interpreter for the Shepaug Dam Eagle Viewing Area and Essex Steam Train’s Eagle Flyer, Ginny Apple.

## Police

- The Police Department has experienced a rapid COVID-19 symptom rate among staff over the past 2 weeks. The issue appears to have subsided, but approximately 12 personnel have been exposed, reported symptoms or tested positive over the past 2 weeks.
- The Police Department has also experienced staffing issues with the retirement of Detective Laiuppa, the recent resignation of Officer Kara Klimaszewski, Dispatcher Elizabeth Ocasta and Candidate Mark Voeltz, and a few long-term light duty staff positions.
- Vacancies in the dispatch center have resulted in higher than expected overtime expenditures, and forced work hours for staff.
- The Police Department, Town Engineer and Department of Public Works are working on the no tractor trailer ordinance for several streets in Town. The signage is being posted, and the Police Department will be conducting enforcement.
- Emergency management is working to organize the distribution of more COVID-19 test kits next week. A deployment planning meeting is scheduled.

## Planning/Development/Engineering Services

Pending for the 1/27/22 Town Plan and Zoning Commission:

- Special Permit application of BCI, Inc. d.b.a. Butler Company to add 106 & 110 West Dudley Town Road to their existing Special Permit at West Dudley Town Road and to allow accessory uses common to the headquarters of a landscape and construction company including outside storage and processing of earthen materials.
- Special permit application of Sivakumar Palaniyandy and Anand Palani to transfer an existing Package Store Liquor License (Gillette Ridge Wines & Spirits) to a new space located in Geisler’s Plaza.
- Special Permit application of Kahlid Mahmood; Khalid LLC. to convert an existing repair garage to a convenience store with gasoline sales and a drive-through window at 1301 Blue Hills Ave
- Petition by 25 Jerome Ave, LLC, (Paul Butler) for a change of zone boundary from Bloomfield Center District (BCD) to Bloomfield Center Special Development District (SDD) for 3.1 acres of property located at 16, 18 and 20 Jerome Ave. Wetlands approved their development permit on January 10 and they will be submitting for final Site Plan review for 150 units for consideration at the February 24 Town Plan and Zoning Commission meeting. They have been before the Design Review Board informally for two meetings and will be back at the February 3 BDRB meeting for revisions.

- Revised Site Plan for a previously approved development at 1146 Blue Hills Ave. consisting of 20 residential units, Dalos and Stearn, LLC applicant, 1735 Asylum Ave, LLC. owner.

A lot of interest in cannabis operations. Draft regulations should be ready for February or March hearing. Current moratorium on application ends on April 1. Growth operations will be allowed in Industrial Districts with some specific standards. Retail will most likely follow the same rules that currently exists for alcoholic beverage sales with appropriate separation distances to impacted land uses such as churches, playgrounds, etc.

Temporary Event regulations are in draft form and are being tweaked for possible hearing in February or March.

GoNetSpeed is being deployed in select areas of Town. Offers high-speed internet connections over fiber optic lines. Residents and businesses that have it available should have received a mailing from the company.

Land Use and Economic Development Subcommittee voted to recommend to the full Council the granting of an easement over a small stretch of LaSalette Park land for Metropolitan District Commission underground utilities and emergency fire access.

Inquiries regarding potential Natural Gas vehicle fueling station and Battery Storage facility.

Environmental Planner is working on seeking out interest to have an anaerobic digester on a site to handle food waste and reduce the amount of trash we send to the landfill/incinerator.

Starting this spring the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) will begin work on the replacement of Bridge No. 01489 carrying Park Avenue (State Route 178) over Beamans Brook. The DOT inspection report indicates that the existing bridge does not meet current hydraulic design requirements and the structure is in need of replacement.

Based off of the preconstruction meeting, Park Avenue is anticipated to be closed at the work area between the day after the last day of school (June 15<sup>th</sup>) to the day before school is back in session (August 24<sup>th</sup>) for a maximum of 70 consecutive days. A public notice will be issued and the Town will be notified at least 14 days in advance of the road closure, and I can provide schedule updates as they are available from the project team.

An approximately 2 mile detour will direct traffic to Prospect Street or Tyler Street to Cottage Grove Road.

The contact documents indicate that while school is in session the contractor will not be permitted to perform any work which will interfere with traffic operations on weekdays 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on weekends 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. During the allowable periods outside of these times, and when the contractor is actively working, the contractor is permitted to maintain and protect alternating one way traffic operation. A temporary pedestrian bridge will also be constructed just north of the existing bridge to facilitate pedestrian traffic around the construction site.

At this time the construction schedule and timing of the road closure are not finalized, but please take this preliminary information into consideration for summer programming.

#### Engineering

- Filley Park: Design concept modification alternatives being presented to Filley Park Committee on January 20 and February 3 for final recommendations.
- Brentwood Drive: Proposal being prepared by on-call consultant Martinez Couch Associates for final design package for project.
- Greenway: Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) received request for proposal responses for East Coast Greenway Gap Closure Study for Bloomfield, Hartford, and East Hartford.



Engineering staff participated in the consultant selection process. The study is expected to take 18 months, with significant public input, to complete.

- Traffic calming: Public information session for Maple Avenue to be conducted on January 26.
- Hoskins Road Culvert: Staff met with property owner and provided draft permission agreement to allow project grading work on their property.

## Human Resources

- The Human Resources Department is continuing with the following recruitments ( also see table)
  - Assistant Assessor – Start date 1/31/22
  - Director of Planning & Economic Development – finalists’ interviews 1/21/22
  - Crew Chief – oral board interviews 1/25/22
  - Administrative Clerk – written test being held on 1/24/22
  - Librarian I – PT – oral board interviews within the next few weeks
  - Youth & Family Worker – tentative offer

| Recruiting Positions as of 1/18/22 | Posted         |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Librarian I - PT                   | 11/8/2021      | Closed                           |
| Assessor                           | 11/10/2021     | Open until filled                |
| Director of Planning & Economics   | 11/18/2021     | Final interviews 1/21            |
| PT Dispatcher                      | 7/26/2021      | Backgrounds are being done by PD |
| FT Dispatcher                      | certified list | Backgrounds are being done by PD |
| Crew Chief (internal) Fleet        | 12/7/2021      | Oral Board interviews 1/25/22    |
| Youth and Family Worker            | 11/17/2021     | Tentative offer                  |
| Administrative Clerk (external)    | 12/9/2021      | Testing 1/24/22                  |
| Senior Recreation Assistant        | 12/14/2021     | Open until filled                |
| Pool Director                      | 12/14/2021     | Reposted until 2/7               |
| Pool Maintainer                    | 12/14/2021     | Reposted until 2/7               |
| Police Sergeant (internal)         | 1/4/2022       | Closes 1/31/22                   |

Very truly yours,

*Stanley D Hawthorne*

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