

Good day Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and Councilors,

Here are the latest updates from the Community Building Leadership Team Meeting held on December 1, 2021 including topical subjects and departmental reported issues.

### **COMMUNICATIONS WITH COUNCILORS**

Communication from Councilors to staff is often organic follow-up based on questions, interests or circumstances as may relate to your responsibilities and expertise. There is no reason to be uncomfortable with any natural occurrence of discussion or exchange between adults, as we all are, regardless of title or position.

Some of you, I'm sure, have experienced times when those communications may not be comfortable or may even seem inappropriate. Unless you, as staff, have initiated questionable communication, there is no cause for you to be concerned on your role, if approached by an elected official for consultation or a request. You are encouraged at such times to listen respectfully and advise the Town Manager following any such questionable exchanges.

Councilors may, from time to time, ask a question or request information which you do not have readily available. In those instances, your interaction should remain courteous and respectful but not committal if you are uncomfortable with the appropriateness of the request. If the request is appropriate, provide the answer. If an answer to a question or request is unknown, answer accordingly.

You may ask that any request be made in writing, preferably by email so that you can fully assess the request and copy the Town Manager, if omitted from knowledge of the request or conversation. Email affords all appropriate parties an opportunity to not only memorialize questions and requests but to better ensure proper inclusion, assessment, and response.

### **HOLIDAY CALENDAR (Observation by a Community Builder)**

Community Builder was of the opinion that making Juneteenth (the newest federal holiday) a holiday for the Town of Bloomfield would go a long way in the progression of social equity and justice. It is my experience that a federal holiday is not automatically extended as a holiday to local governments but certainly something to consider for the future of Bloomfield. Making Juneteenth a holiday for Town of Bloomfield employees does come with financial implications. A previous estimate was in the range of \$82,000.

### **OFFICE SPACE (Observation by Town Manager)**

Personal space and office environments are critical to comfort and productivity on the job. After a recent weekend tour of office space at Town Hall, I believe there is room for improvement on the part of the organization as well as individuals to create workspaces not only for our employees to feel more comfortable and productive during their workday, but also for neighbors who come to Town Hall or those who give the benefit of the doubt that their property is being properly cared and is suitable for the conduct of community business. It's our collective responsibility to offer clean, kempt, inviting, productive and professional public spaces.

The importance of preserving paper information and documents goes without saying and may be required by Connecticut statutes. The Town Clerk will be sending out a reminder of the policy on document retention/destruction but equally important is the need to eliminate clutter and hoarding of paper and boxes. This maintenance should be accomplished immediately. If it's a matter of storage capacity, let us know what you need so we can help accomplish this together. In this virtual and electronic world, we can certainly find ways to rid our offices of any *unnecessary* paper.

Treat your domain as if a Councilor, Town Manager, or one of our esteemed neighbors will visit for an intimate tour of their Town Hall offices. The Facilities Maintenance Division of Public Works in concert with Town Hall Officeholders is expected to provide a needs assessment/request of improvements during the upcoming budget cycle.

### **SUCCESSION PLANNING [Continuing Discussion Series]:**

As loyal, committed and knowledgeable members of the Community Building Leadership Team (CBLT), none of us should allow ourselves to become near indispensable. Leaders of the team should give considerable thought to formulating a plan to have other staff members step into your shoes should something prevent you from performing your duties. Ask yourselves: how are you preparing for your department, division, or office to ensure the community does not go without applicable services in your absence? Are your staff members trained and ready to assume your responsibilities, temporarily or even permanently?

The following Departments/Divisions reported on their current status of succession planning or related issues of current impact or concern:

**Finance**: when staff is limited, duties and tasks are managed by others in the department and this obviously causes hardships regarding job completion. Training has been an issue – some cross training is done once a quarter but more is necessary. Positions which require certifications make filling some positions more difficult such as in the Assessor's Office where 3 of 4 full time positions are currently vacant and have proven to be difficult and extended recruitments. Written procedures are critical to the department, as highlighted in recent reporting of extended deadlines necessary this year for the Annual Audit and development of the Grand List.

**Human Resources (HR)**: comprehensive manuals were created some time ago so that were anyone to be out for any period, another staff member could step in seamlessly. Cross training has been on-going with Human Resources Generalist Kathy Roberts who has been instrumental in providing assistance and expertise on many job functions. She is currently training the newly selected community builder for the HR Assistant role so that she herself can get to the task of her new role as HR Generalist. The timeline and future of the Acting HR Director role is unclear for the time being with the indefinite leave status of the Human Resources Director. Rosa Matias is doing her best to meet responsibilities of both the Acting Director and Deputy Director positions currently.

**Information Systems and Technology (IST)**: there is certainly a value in creating a manual for IST, the most technical of procedures arguably. Cross training is in progress particularly with a recruitment selection having recently been made to fill a long-standing, market very competitive

position. Organization charting was shared by the IST Director which will serve as a model of organization charts for all departments going forward and will be developed and introduced during the FY 2023 Budgeting Cycle.

Land Use: the importance of procedural manuals hit home when incumbents for key functions of the department, Mike Kosilla and Helen Durfee, retired last year. Furthermore, the retirement of the incumbent Director, Jose Giner, will test the very governmental structure of the organization given the wide range of boards and committees that have largely relied solely on the Director's guidance without the benefit of a Deputy prepared for an interim or permanent succession. Providing a succession plan to transition the Director's responsibilities will be critical as he looks to retire in February 2022.

### **TRANSITION FROM TOWN OF BLOOMFIELD POST OFFICE BOX**

The Town's Post Office (P.O.) Box is currently serviced by the Public Works Department, specifically by a Building Maintainer who is out on worker's compensation leave at this time. When a Building Maintainer goes to pick up the mail from the P.O. Box, he or she has to stop what they are doing and take an hour or hour and a half to do this which causes a disruption to their workflow. The recommendation is to phase out the P.O. Box beginning June 30, 2022.

### **REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL ACTION AGENDA ITEMS**

November 8, 2021 Minutes – Tax Refunds to be processed

November 29, 2021 Minutes – Tax Refunds to be processed. Cancellation of December 27<sup>th</sup> Town Council Meeting posted. Ad Hoc Committee for Minority Set-Aside Policy tabled. Consent agenda referred to and acted upon by the Administration and Education Subcommittee.

### **DEPARTMENTAL UPDATES**

#### **Public Works**

- Capital road work completed with the reconstruction of Old Pequonock Road.
- Installed Christmas lights for community tree lighting ceremony.
- Completed catch basin cleaning (over 3000 catch basins)
- Started storm drainage repairs including items identified in this summer's heavy rainfall events.
- Making preparation for winter operations which includes servicing trucks and equipment, acquiring supplies such as road salt and sidewalk melt and updating our emergency snow removal plan.
- Continuing review for re-accreditation by the American Public Works Association.

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

- BPL was awarded a library construction grant in the amount of \$1,000,000 by the Connecticut State Library Board towards new construction of Prosser Library.
- Director Lane presented what BPL has been doing around Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) during a Connecticut Library Consortium Community Collaborative on EDI. BPL continues to be a leader in CT on actionable efforts on this subject.

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

- Issued 49 purchase orders in November valued at \$427,817.
- Request for proposal for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning services opened 12/1/21.
- Interviewed 3 architectural firms for the space utilization analysis of Bloomfield Police Department.
- Obtaining proposals for geo-tech and surveying services for the Libraries project.
- Completed report on coronavirus relief funding (CRF); remaining municipal CRF funding balance of \$63,587 will be incurred by end of December 2021; notified by Office of Policy Management (OPM) that they are doing municipal audits of the CRF expenses as a result of issues in West Haven. We have not been chosen or contacted by the OPM auditors but we have all of the invoices and back up and are confident that our expenses will survive scrutiny.

## **Leisure Services**

- Annual Holiday Tree Lighting & Parade was held on Saturday, December 4, 2021. Neighbors throughout the community joined us for the Town of Bloomfield's annual Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting Ceremony welcoming in the Holiday Season. The holiday parade featured local fire departments and community organizations alike. The arrival of Santa Claus on his signature classic fire truck led the way to Town Hall for our Light Up the Center Tree Lighting Ceremony.
- In support of the Wintonbury Land Trust and Trees for Bloomfield Photo Contest, the Leisure Services Department worked with this organization to host the photo contest awards ceremony held at the Alvin & Beatrice Wood Human Services Center on Thursday, December 9.
- Winter/Spring program publication was completed and posted online and advertised to the community. Please check out all of our program offerings.

## **Police**

- Certified Officer Mark Voeltz started two weeks ago. Mark comes to us from Fishkill, NY.
- Police Chief extended a conditional offer to candidate Nathan Chesworth. He is scheduled to attend the Hartford Police Academy mid-December.
- Unfortunately, Police Chief had to rescind an offer to a previous candidate, due to failure of a State-mandated test.

- Sergeant Anthony Lustrinalli's last day was December 1st. He is taking a position with the Farmington Police Department on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - He cited retirement benefits as the primary reason for his departure.
- Detective Suzanne Laiuppa also notified Police Chief that she will be leaving by the end of the month. She also cited retirement benefits as the primary reason.
- The Detective division made 2 significant arrests this week. One for a shooting that took place several weeks ago on Tunxis Ave, and the second an armed robbery that happened last month.
- The Greater Hartford Regional Auto Theft Task Force (GHRATTF) has been very productive to date. On a regional basis, they have made the following:
  - 65 stolen vehicles recovered
  - 23 arrests for auto theft and related offences.
  - 9 firearms seized.
  - 28 arrest warrants served.
- We are completing our access control system with the assistance of the Information Systems and Technology Division.

### Senior Services

- distributed 150 Connecticut FoodShare turkeys and fixings, along with stuffing mix and cranberry sauce.
- partnered with Oxford Home Care to provide an early Thanksgiving lunch to go.
- hosted a lung cancer prescreening event presented by doctors from the Carol & Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center. 60 individuals completed questionnaires with 30 having a private consultation with one of the doctors.
- hosted a Red Cross Blood Drive.
- partnered with Leisure Services to host a paint night party.
- began a new, 24-week series of the Tai Ji Quan Moving For Better Balance class.
- Zoom book discussion on December 8 at 2:00 pm.
- Women's breakfast on December 10 at 9:30 am.
- Aging Mastery Program graduation celebration on December 13 at 10:30 am.
- LGBT Rainbow Lunch on December 16 at noon via Zoom.
- Men's breakfast on December 17 at 9:30 am

### Human Resources

- Open positions:
  - Assistant Assessor
  - Assessor
  - Director of Planning and Economics
  - Youth & Family Worker
  - Administrative Clerk – Assessor's office
  - PT Librarian I
  - Crew Chief – Fleet internal
- HR Staff Assistant position – filled

- Crew Chief internal position – Promoted Ryan French and Mike Leduc.
- Assistant Town Clerk – contingent offer.
- Assistant IT Director – contingent offer.
- Zoning Enforcement Officer – contingent offer.
- Part-time Dispatcher position – conducting background check.
- Full-time Dispatcher position – will be calling in the next person on the certified list to do backgrounds (Elizabeth Acosta resigned moving to California).
- Police Contract has been ratified. We will be processing the General Wage Increase and the back pay.

## Planning

- Town Plan and Zoning Commission approved the Gillette Ridge Shoppes to move and expand the existing Starbucks to 2,930 square feet (s.f.) and reconfigure the remaining floor space in the existing retail center for 15,950 s.f. of medical services which includes a 3,000 s.f. building expansion; and to add a new 5,040 s.f. stand-alone building on property located at 848 Cottage Grove Road in a Design Development Zone (DDZ).
- Pending 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. in an I-2 District, Patrick K. Robertson, owner.
- Pending Special Permit application of BCI, Inc. d.b.a. Butler Company to add 106 & 110 West Dudley Town Road to the existing Special Permit for 90.92, 98, 100, 104 and 116 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.
- Pending Wetlands Permit application of 25 Jerome, LLC, at 0, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24 and 26 Jerome Avenue, for a new apartment development (Phase II – 150 units).
- Pending Wetlands Permit Application of 31 Tobey LTD, at 31 Tobey Road, for a self-storage facility.
- 270 Woodland is on the market – 17.5 acres of I-2 property.
- CRCEC School looking to have students by January 3. Final Building Inspections are underway.

Very truly yours,

Stanley D Hawthorne

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