



Keith Chapman  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF NEWINGTON

200 GARFIELD STREET  
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

## OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

### MEMORANDUM

To: Newington Town Council  
From: Keith Chapman, Town Manager  
Date: May 14, 2021  
Re: Monthly Report – December 2020

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#### **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

As the result of the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic and the continuing Declaration of Civil Preparedness Emergency filed on December 11<sup>th</sup> in the Town Clerk's office, the Town Hall remains closed, non-essential meetings have been cancelled and essential meetings are being held remotely.

On December 1<sup>st</sup>, I participated in the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) panel discussion; how do uncertain times affect municipal construction? Why is NOW the best time for a capital project? I discussed the following; pros and cons of referendum during the pandemic, why the Town of Newington decided to move forward with the Anna Reynolds ES referendum, and our current capital projects. Downes Construction Company and I, shared our insight of what we saw during the pandemic and how the projects (Town Hall) kept moving forward.

On December 4<sup>th</sup>, I met with Paul Zito from New England Radio Consultants LLC (NERC), who is completing a Town-wide Radio infrastructure assessment. The full report will be presented to the Town Council in January.

I met with Attorney Peter Boorman on December 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss the potential of donated property located on 70 Culver Street.

On December 7<sup>th</sup>, Tom Molloy, Rob Hillman and I met to discuss our current sanitation contracts to explore opportunities that may exist to help alleviate some of the in-house responsibilities.

During the Town Council meeting on December 8<sup>th</sup>, awards were presented for "Building a Strong Community" for select recipients. I updated the Town Council on the following; the status of COVID-19 virus and the current actions being taken within the municipality, and the status of the Town Hall Renovation Project. In accordance with the Town of Newington Charter and Town Manager Contract, the Town Council acted to approve the residency extension requirement for an additional six (6) months as a result of the pandemic.

Our Emergency Management Director (Meghan Manke) hosted a meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020 regarding a severe winter warning and preparedness. The forecast called for parts of Connecticut to receive accumulations of more than a foot of snow and wind gusts of up to 45 miles per hour along the coast.

Announced by the Honorable Governor Ned Lamont, Connecticut is starting to prepare for the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. We met with Charlie Brown, Director of Health to discuss phases of the tiered approach and the distribution plan.

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Renata Bertotti, Town Planner and I met periodically throughout her first month of employment for the Town.

The Town Assessor and I continually met with potential developers and State agencies of Connecticut to discuss economic development opportunities.

Department head one-on-ones have been postponed and will be scheduled as-needed.

Overtime

Paid overtime during the month of December 2020 was as follows: Note that overtime costs include all instances and may be charged to non-operating budgets (i.e. road projects).

<b>HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT</b>	<b>Overtime Hours</b>	<b>Cost</b>
VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT	30.0	\$ 1,622.57
WEEKEND STAND-BY AND CALL-IN	16.0	\$ 900.48
ROAD MAINTENANCE	16.0	\$ 1,039.68
TRAFFIC	6.0	\$ 352.88
LEAVES	50.0	\$ 2,455.01
SNOW	523.7	\$ 27,662.10
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>642.0</b>	<b>\$ 34,032.72</b>
<b>PARKS AND GROUNDS DIVISION</b>	<b>Overtime Hours</b>	<b>Cost</b>
General Grounds	268.0	\$ 12,624.00
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>268.0</b>	<b>\$ 12,624.00</b>

	<b>20-21 Budget Overtime Appr.</b>	<b>Overtime Expended 20-21 YTD</b>	<b>19-20 Budget Overtime Appr.</b>	<b>Overtime Expended 19-20 YTD</b>
<b>POLICE DEPARTMENT</b>				
Administration	\$ 8,175.00	\$ 314.42	\$ 7,927.00	\$ 605.93
Patrol	685,889.00	358,921.76	655,308.00	372,725.82
Investigation	90,645.00	24,401.27	89,232.00	18,269.33
Communication	173,748.00	97,510.02	169,820.00	76,306.82
Education/Training	143,085.00	48,252.81	138,826.00	72,415.58
Support Services	60,413.00	11,881.38	59,255.00	24,595.14
Animal Control	<u>1,511.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,511.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
Total	\$ 1,163,466.00	\$ 541,281.66	\$ 1,121,879.00	\$ 564,918.62
<b>HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT</b>				
Highway Operations	\$ 28,085.00	\$ 46,589.70	\$ 28,085.00	\$ 8,486.73
Snow and Ice Control	165,297.00	24,972.83	165,297.00	34,070.15
Traffic	4,057.00	3,606.04	4,057.00	1,770.64
Vehicles and Equipment	32,822.00	28,573.51	32,822.00	13,129.95
Leaf Collection	<u>33,898.00</u>	<u>33,259.54</u>	<u>33,898.00</u>	<u>28,151.17</u>
Total	\$ 264,159.00	\$ 137,001.62	\$ 264,159.00	\$ 85,608.64
<b>PARKS AND GROUNDS</b>				
Parks and Grounds	\$ 84,839.00	\$ 65,148.00	\$ 84,839.00	\$ 54,834.65
Cemeteries	<u>16,445.00</u>	<u>3,630.31</u>	<u>16,445.00</u>	<u>6,052.18</u>
Total	\$ 101,284.00	\$ 68,778.31	\$ 101,284.00	\$ 60,886.83

**PERSONNEL**

- The vacant Librarian I (T-1) in the Information Technology Department was offered to Victoria Buttarro, she began her position on December 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The vacant Librarian II (T-3) in the Circulation Department was offered to Kaitlin Gontarz, she began her position on December 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- The vacant Part-time Library Technician and Substitute position was posted to the public on December 14<sup>th</sup>, with a closing date of December 28<sup>th</sup>.
- The vacant Administrative Secretary I (C-8) in the Parks and Recreation position was posted internally on December 4<sup>th</sup>, with a closing date of December 10<sup>th</sup>. The position was posted to the public on December 15<sup>th</sup> with a closing date of December 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Testing took place for the vacant Groundskeeper I (LT-10) position on December 8<sup>th</sup> (written) and December 14<sup>th</sup> (practical).
- Testing took place for the vacant Highway Operator II (HLT-13) position on December 16<sup>th</sup> (written) and December 30<sup>th</sup> (practical).
- Testing took place for the vacant Highway Equipment Mechanic II (HLT-17) on December 9<sup>th</sup> (written), interviews took place on December 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Lisa Delude, Administrative Secretary I (C-8) transferred to the Human Services Department, effective December 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Karen Gagliardi, Administrative Secretary I (C-8) for the Human Services Department, retired on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 after 26+ years of service.
- Master Police Officer Daniel Kaufman retired on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 from the Town of Newington after 20 years of service.
- Tom Molloy, Highway Superintendent, retired on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 from the Town of Newington after 24 years of service.

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

2020-21 Blue Cross/Blue Shield Plan Year

The fifth month of the 2020-21 plan year produced a combined paid claim total that was lower than those estimates that were developed at renewal. The monthly claims for the 2020-21 plan year were estimated at \$963,049. The total paid claims from the Health Benefits Fund for November 2020 were \$549,909. It should be noted that the claims for retired participants are charged to the OPEB. The breakdown for the active participants for the Town and Board of Education is as follows.

Claims through November, 2020

	Town	Board of Education	Total
Estimated Claims	1,316,610	3,498,035	4,814,645
Actual Claims	574,701	2,564,311	3,139,012

**Accounting and Administration**

- The auditors supplied our office with the final copy of the audit for the fiscal year ending June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Copies were forwarded to all required agencies for their records.
- Janet Murphy, Finance Director continues working with the Insurance and Benefit Administrator on the transfer of our HSA banking from Benefit Wallet to HSA Bank. Several meetings were attended regarding the new bank starting January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and the transfer of remaining funds taking place in February.
- Deputy Finance Director, Lisa Rydecki, received the CIP submissions from the department heads and summarized that information for the meetings between the Town Manager and the Department Heads.

- Finance Department is working with all departments in the preparation of their 2021-2022 fiscal year operating budgets which are due in our office by January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- Both Accounts Payable and Payroll are working on their year-end reporting in anticipation of the processing of W-2s and 1099s in January.

The Town received grant payments from the State of Connecticut during this month for the Mashantucket Pequot Grant and School Building Grant in the amount of \$54,975 and \$107,017 respectively. The Town received the following interest rates on investments. This list includes outstanding investments that are under the control of the Finance Department and includes the General Fund and other Town Funds.

**INVESTMENTS, BY ACCOUNTING TYPE**  
(Unaudited)  
12/31/2020

	Interest Earnings		\$ Invested
	Budget FY2020-21	Actual Year to Date	
General Fund	\$300,000	\$34,215	\$36,223,992
Special Revenue Funds	48,000	820	741,919
Capital Projects Funds		571	1,094,269
Internal Service Fund	35,000	2,776	5,772,538
Trust and Agency Funds		1,093	1,109,864
<b>TOTAL, ESTIMATED BY FUND</b>			<b>\$44,942,582</b>

**INVESTMENTS, BY INSTITUTION TYPE**  
(Unaudited)  
12/31/2020

	Interest %		Interest \$		\$ Invested
	Current Month	Last Month	Current Month	Last Month	
STIF	.07	.07	1,052	977	\$16,868,929
Bank North	.12	.12	119	115	561,096
TDBank (new)	.25	.25	2,292	2,219	10,827,310
Farmington Bank	.15	.18	1,074	1,073	8,450,383
Webster Bank	.10	.10	382	461	3,176,257
Liberty Bank	.15	.15	665	603	5,058,607
<b>Total Outstanding Investments</b>					<b>\$44,942,582</b>

*Rates reflect avg. monthly yield, annualized*

**Assessor**

- Real estate deeds were read and entered in the computer assisted mass appraisal system through the end of December 2020.
- All new construction and permit related changes to Real Estate have been inspected, valued and processed in our CAMA system for inclusion on the October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 Grand List.
- Personal property valuation is approximately 70% complete. A few problem declarations that were filed still need to be processed and then approximately 425 accounts that failed to file a declaration will be electronically valued including statutory required penalties for non-compliance.
- We received the 2020 Regular Motor Vehicle list in from the Connecticut DMV and began pricing all vehicles that did not get priced at DMV. Out of approximately 27,762 vehicles, about 347 need to be priced manually.
- We completed the processing of the 2019 Supplemental Motor Vehicle list and the bills were sent to taxpayers at the end of the month. Feedback from the public in terms of questions, calls, and in person visits to the office has been very active.

- The 2020 Revaluation proceeded into the appeal stage as new assessment notices were mailed out to all property owners beginning on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Beginning immediately, the revaluation company (eQuality, Valuations) started to conduct appeal hearings for taxpayers wishing to contest their valuations. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all hearings were held via telephone and/or zoom internet sessions. Hearings will continue until the third week of January 2021. Based upon significant input directly received from taxpayers, the Assessor conducted an independent review of the valuations of units in two large residential condominium complexes and recommended adjustments to the values in the Robin Brook and Crown Ridge development.
- Finally, staff remained on skeleton levels per directives from the Town Manager and conducted much of this work remotely from home.

**Revenue Collector**

- Collections for December on the 2019 Grand List amounted to \$11,034,765.70 and back tax collections were \$30,603.92. Included in the back-tax amount was \$3,894.60 which was collected for suspended accounts.
- This year the total collections through December 2020 were 66% which was the same as what was collected in December 2019.
- There were 3,870 Supplemental Motor Vehicle tax bills mailed at the end of December for taxpayers registering cars after October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.
- Taxpayers are encouraged to make payments by mail, drop box, or online due to the pandemic.
- Legal Notices were published for the second installment on Real Estate and Personal Property taxes, the Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes.
- Press Releases were placed in local papers as well as on Newington’s web-site and its social media to remind taxpayers there is no second billing for the real estate.
- Governor Lamont signed Executive Order 9R at the very end of December granting (provided municipality approved) a 90-day extension for taxpayers for the January installment. Landlords would need to complete an application for the extension with the Revenue Collector as they did this past summer if they would like the extension.
- As a result of the extension the Revenue Collector created a Reminder Notice for the 2nd installments which amounted to almost 8,000 reminders. The reminders were printed, stuffed and stamped in the office requiring much extra time, and began to be mailed as time permits. The remaining reminders will be sent out early in January.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Patrol Calls for December are as follows:

Abandoned MV 1	Fire Task Force Activation 0	MV Evading 9
Administrative 0	Fire Training 0	MV Fatal 0
Alarm Commercial Burg Alarm 63	Fire Trouble Alarm 0	MV Injury 6
Alarm Hold Up Alarm 1	Fire Veh Maintenance 0	MV Property Only 82
Alarm Residential Burg Alarm 19	Fire Vehicle Fire 0	Neighbor 11
ALTERED MENTAL STATUS 0	Fire Water Problem 0	Noise 16
Animal Complaint 10	Fireworks 2	Non Collect Person 0
Arson/Fire Invest 0	Follow Up 30	Notification 0
Assault 3	Found Property 8	Open Door/Window 22
Assault in Progress 0	Gun 0	Other Archive 0
Assist Motorist 4	Harassment 11	Parking Violation 4
Assist Notification 1	Hazard 33	PD ASSIST FIRE DEPT 18
Assist Other Agency 23	Hazmat 0	Personal Relief 0

Bad Check Insufficient Funds 0	Hold Up Alarm 0	Pistol Permit 56
Blighted Property 0	HOPE PROJECT 0	Prisoner Care 3
Bomb Threat 0	Illegal Dumping 2	Private Duty 0
Breach of Peace/Disorderly 3	Impersonating Police 0	Property Found 5
Burglar Alarm 1	Indecent Exposure 0	Property Lost 4
Burglary 3	Intoxicated 7	Prostitution 0
Car Seat 0	Juvenile Complaint 10	Recovered Stolen MV 2
Check Welfare 36	K9 Assist 0	Rescue Call 0
Check Welfare 911 28	Kidnapping 0	Residential Lockout 1
Check Welfare Other 6	Landlord/Tenant Dispute 4	Robbery 1
Clear Lot 2	Larceny 64	Roll Call 2
Construction 0	Larceny from MV 148	Serve Subpoena 0
Court Detail 11	Lift Assist Only 6	Serve Warrant 16
Criminal Mischief 16	Liquor 0	Sexual Assault 6
CSO 0	Local Traffic Authority 0	Shots Fired 0
Customer Dispute 14	Location Check 236	Specific Detail 81
Dog Complaint 32	Location General 0	State Pistol Permit – Tempo 0
Domestic 33	Location School 0	Stolen MV 12
Door Check 0	Lockout Building 0	Sudden Death 4
Drug 4	Lockout MV 0	Suicide 0
DUI 4	Lost Property 3	Suicide Attempt 0
EDP 24	LTA 0	Suspicious MV Unoccupied 26
Escort/Transport 5	Meal 0	Suspicious Report 152
Escort/Funeral 1	Medical Alarm 23	TEST 0
Escort Other 0	Medical Cardiac 10	Threatening 6
ESCORT RETRIEVAL 0	Medical Complaint 171	Tobacco 0
Escort Tax 0	Medical Diabetic 2	Tow 15
Fingerprint 0	Medical Fall 27	Town Ordinance Violation 2
Fire Alarm 0	Medical Mutual 0	Traffic Stop 111
Fire CO Detector no sympt 0	Medical Other 0	Traffic Survey 0
Fire CO Detector with sympt 0	Medical Respiratory 14	Training 0
Fire Extrication 0	Medical Stand By 0	Trespass 9
Fire Hazmat 0	Medical Trauma 0	Unknown 87
Fire Mutual Aid Request 0	Medical Unresponsive 10	Water problem 0
Fire Other 0	Missing 1	
Fire Rescue 0	MV Abandoned 1	
Fire Special Detail 0	MV Assist 43	
Fire Stand By 0	MV Complaint 49	
Fire Structure Fire 0	MV Fire 0	<b>Total: 2,032</b>

- In December, the Detective Division:
  - Handled 74 investigations, 46 remain ongoing; 26 have been closed by investigative methods; 2 have been suspended.

- Served 16 warrants; 12 by Patrol Officers, 4 by the Detective Division.
- In December, the CSO Report:
  - Gimme a Break (Light) Program was in full force.
- In December, the Animal Control Officers had the following activity:
  - 40 Calls – 30 Dog, 20 Animal, 2 Specific Detail, 0 Follow-ups, 0 Car Seat
  - 0 Dog vs Dog Bites/0 Dog Bite w/ Human/0 Feral Cat Bites w/human
  - 2 Impounds – 1 redeemed, 1 sold as pets, 0 euthanized, 0 quarantine, 0 carry over, 0 DOA
  - 0 Infraction written
  - 69 Incoming Phone Calls
  - 4 Wethersfield Mutual Aid Calls – not all these calls are easily identified in CAD
  - 3 Written Warnings
  - 136 Letters (No License/Barking/Littering)
- Breakdown of Calls
  - 510 –
    - 2 Combined Dog/Animal/Specific Detail/Check Welfare
    - 96 Delinquent Letters/ No License/Barking/Littering
    - 0 Infractions
    - 2 Written Warning
    - 0 Dog bite- 0 dog vs human, 0 dog vs dog
    - 0 Dog/Cat Adoption
  - 511 –
    - 15 Combined Dog/Animal/Specific Detail/Check Welfare
    - 40 Delinquent Letters/ No License/Barking/Littering
    - 0 Infractions
    - 1 Written Warning
    - 0 Dog bite- 0 dog vs human, 0 dog vs dog
    - 0 Dog/Cat Adoption
- Other:
  - 30 police assisted Animal/Dog Complaints.
- In December, the Patrol Division had the following activity:
  - During the month of December, officers investigated 147 larceny from motor vehicle complaints. A majority of these incidents occurred in the neighborhoods just east of the Berlin Turnpike on the early morning hours of December 9<sup>th</sup>; 124 larcenies from motor vehicles occurred on this night alone. Leads have been developed in these cases, but the identity of the suspects is unknown and the investigations are ongoing.
  - This agency has also investigated 9 stolen motor vehicle complaints. This is an increase from 3 in November. One stolen vehicle was recovered in Willington, CT after State Police pursued the vehicle and were forced to deploy stop sticks to end the pursuit. Six occupants within the vehicle were arrested for possessing the stolen car, one occupant was identified as an 18-year-old and another as a 19-year-old. The other four occupants were uncooperative with law enforcement and failed to provide names or dates of birth. Another vehicle was located abandoned in New Britain and was believed to have been used in other larcenies. The remaining 7 vehicles have not yet been recovered.
  - On 12/05/20, Officers responded to a report of a robbery at the Salvation Army store located at 2230 Berlin Turnpike. The victim reported she was closing up the store with two other employees when she was approached by an armed suspect in the parking lot. The suspect struck the victim in the head with a firearm and then stole the night deposit from the victim and fled in a vehicle northbound on the Berlin Turnpike. Three days later, with the assistance of Hartford PD, the vehicle was located in the city. Newington Detectives took custody of the vehicle and it was seized for processing. The case remains under investigation by the Detective Division.
  - On 12/22/20, an Officer conducted a traffic stop for an equipment violation. Upon approaching the vehicle, the officer detected the odor of burnt Marijuana emanating from the vehicle. Upon conducting a search of the vehicle, the officer located Crack Cocaine, Marijuana, a substance believed to be Fentanyl, and cash. The operator was arrested for drug possession, drug sale, and motor vehicle charges.

Property Report December 2020

<b>Category</b>	<b># of Counts</b>	<b>Property Value (\$)</b>
Burned	0	\$ 0
Counterfeited/Forged	2	\$ 2
Damaged/Destroyed	133	\$ 48,661
Vehicle Inventory	0	\$ 0
Stolen	158	\$ 342,621
Abandoned	0	\$ 0
Evidence	114	\$ 37,991
Found	4	\$ 1
Lost	4	\$ 150
Seized	21	\$ 102
Recovered	19	\$ 37,206
Impounded	0	\$ 0
Informational	0	\$ 0
Towed	0	\$ 0
<b>Total</b>	<b>455</b>	<b>\$ 466,734</b>

- Police Department Overtime December:

- o Comparison

➤ OT November	\$ 87,117	2 pay periods (one holidays)
➤ OT December	\$ 139,315	3 pay periods (two holiday)
	\$ 52,198	increase

- o During December 2020, one officer was on light duty assigned to the Patrol Division for a two-week period prior to retirement. Another officer from the Patrol Division has remained temporarily assigned to the Detective Division, serving as the property officer since the civilian property officer remains unfilled and a third officer has continued on light duty assisting in the Detective Division resulting in three vacancies in the Patrol Division. Additionally, there are two officer openings in the Patrol Division. These vacancies have an impact on patrol overtime since some patrol districts are left unstaffed which could be used to reduce overtime by covering officers who may take time off. Also, if the 105 (midnight) district officer's days off fall on Thursday, Friday or Saturday, that shift is covered with patrol overtime as well.
- o Admin overtime \$0, the same as the previous month.
- o Patrol overtime. \$88,274, an increase of \$28,146 from the previous month. Overtime included holiday pay of \$28,191, filling of shifts for time off (vacation, sick, earned time), 105 district days off (Thurs, Fri, Sat) and holdovers for officers involved in casework related to domestic disputes, a death investigation, a prisoner detail at Hartford Hospital and motor vehicle larceny investigations. Additionally, a sergeant was on light duty for nine days and officers participated in an escort of Santa Claus for the Parks and Recreation Department.
- o Detective Division overtime. \$5,964, an increase of \$4,225 from the previous month. Overtime included holiday pay of \$688 and detectives participating in surveillance and investigative efforts to combat motor vehicle larcenies. Additionally, a detective also participated in firearms qualifications and a firearms related detail in the armory.
- o Communications overtime. \$29,299, an increase of \$12,427 from the previous month. Overtime included holiday pay of \$5,610, filling of shifts for time off (vacation, sick, earned time) and filling of shifts on days and evenings when only one dispatcher is scheduled to ensure two dispatchers are present on all day/evening shifts. Additionally, a second dispatcher is staffed on overtime from 0000 hours to 0400 hours on the midnight shift on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Also, shifts have been filled on overtime to cover a dispatcher who has been absent from work under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- o Education overtime. \$11,849, an increase of \$5,029 from the previous month. Overtime included holiday pay of \$2,200 and the covering of shifts for officers assigned to the following training; low light firearms, Mid State Accident Reconstruction Squad, LEADS Instructor, NTOA Crisis Negotiations, COLLECT recertification and an online use of force seminar.
- o Support Services overtime. \$3,361, a decrease of \$1,803 from the previous month. Overtime included holiday pay of \$688 and the filling of shifts taken off by the School Resource Officer at Newington High School.



**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

The following is a report of the activities of the Newington Fire Department for the month of December, 2020. During this period, fire department members responded to alarms or emergencies. A summary of these alarms and a manpower response break down is detailed below:

	<b>December</b>	<b>6 Months Total</b>
<b><i>FIRES</i></b>		
<b>Structure Fire</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Vehicle Fire</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Exterior Fires</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Other Fires</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b><i>RESCUE CALLS</i></b>		
<b>Pressure Ruptures Explosion Overheat</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Extrication</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Other Rescue Calls</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>
<b><i>SERVICE CALLS</i></b>		
<b>Hazardous Condition Calls</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>Water Problem</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Other Service Calls</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>42</b>
<b><i>OTHER</i></b>		
<b>Good Intent Calls</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>False Alarm/False Call</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>171</b>
<b>Severe Weather/Natural Disaster</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Special Incident Calls</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Mutual Aid/Standby</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>429</b>

**Training Summary for the month of December:** Please be advised that due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 Virus some training is being completed through various online training platforms. Social distancing protocols are in effect for all hands-on sessions.

Cadet Training	Ventilation	50.0 hours
Cadet Training	Scene Size Up	21.0 hours
FSI-II	Classroom	8.0 hours
Driver Training Road Time		4.0 hours
Haz-Mat Awareness	Certification 3 Members	48.0 hours
Haz-Mat Operational	Certification 3 Members	96.0 hours
FF-I Certification	3 Members	318.0 hours
<b>Total Training</b>		<b>505.0 hours</b>

**FIRE CHIEF**

Fire Response: **21** Incidents

- Revise and submit CIP for 2021/2022
- Attend Night of Lights with Engine 1
- Department Head meeting with Town Manager
- Discussion with Task Force Chiefs
- Zoom meeting to discuss operating budget with Captains
- Multiple discussions with Safety about COVID-19
- Meeting with Fire Prevention Officers

- Meeting with Chiefs to discuss new Roles and Responsibilities
- Attend Zoom meeting and Executive session with Board of Fire Commissioners
- Prepare with Communications division for AFG Grant
- Attend Peter Lavery Memorial

**FIRE MARSHAL**

- The Fire Marshal’s Office completed the following activities during the month of December, 2020.

INSPECTIONS	11
INSPECTION FOLLOW-UPS	5
PLAN REVIEWS	5
JOB SITE INSPECTIONS	2
FIRE INVESTIGATIONS	0
FIRE ALARM TROUBLE	6
COMPLAINTS	2
TANK REMOVALS	0
SAFE HOME INSPECTIONS	0
SAFE HOME FOLLOW-UPS	0
HAZ-MAT/HAZARDOUS CONDITION	0
BLASTINGS	0

**Fire Marshal’s Activities:**

- December 1<sup>st</sup> Attended Economic Development Zoom Meeting
- December 8<sup>th</sup> Attended Economic Development Zoom Meeting
- December 15<sup>th</sup> Attended Economic Development Zoom Meeting
- December 16<sup>th</sup> Attended Winter Preparedness Zoom Meeting
- December 22<sup>nd</sup> Attended Economic Development Zoom Meeting
- December 29<sup>th</sup> Attended Economic Development Zoom Meeting
- December 31<sup>st</sup> Attended Staff Meeting with Keith Chapman

**HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

Administration

- Continued to meet with residents to discuss various issues and concerns
- Continued with Landfill closure project tasks
- Met with Sanitation contractors to discuss contract extensions
- Interviewed candidates for Mechanic II position
- Attended EOC staff meeting, several COVID-19 Zoom meetings
- Continued with all project planning and scheduling
- Administered Operator II written and practical exams
- Attended Environmental Quality Commission meeting

Roadway Maintenance

- Continued with litter pickup/graffiti removal Town wide
- Highway operators continued with Landfill material processing
- Crews completed the Annual Leaf Collection Program with the assistance of Parks and Grounds crew and seasonal employees
- Crews removed concrete barriers from several restaurants in Town which were used for outdoor dining during pandemic
- Cleaned leaf equipment and prepared for storage
- Continued with Town wide pot hole patching
- Continued maintenance of catch basins in town
- Removed snow from Municipal Parking Lot
- Responded to four (4) snow/ice events for a total accumulation 16.3”
- Responded to three (3) after hour call ins icy conditions (due to fire/melting) and tree in roadway
- One eviction scheduled for the month requiring storage

### Traffic Division

- Replaced and/or repaired missing/damaged street name and regulatory signs
- Continued to assist with Food Share setup
- Assisted Sanitation Department with the replacement/repair of recycling containers
- Assisted Highway crews in snow plowing/snow removal
- One (1) after hour call in for temporary stop signs due to malfunction of traffic light at East Cedar and Hawley Streets
- Repair/replace stop signs at Hawley and East Cedar Streets
- Assisted Police Department with speed detection device relocation

### Fleet Maintenance

- Assisted Highway Department in snow plowing operations
- Continued with seasonal services, repairs to all snow equipment
- Complete upfitting of new police administrative vehicle
- Mechanics continued with preventive maintenance and emergency repairs to all Town vehicles

### Sanitation/Recycling/Landfill

- Scheduled 912 residential bulk items for collection for the month
- Scheduled 83 condominium bulk items for collection for the month
- Scheduled 44 condo/residential scrap metal items for collection for the month
- 3,878 tons of cumulative Municipal Solid Waste were collected from July through November
- 1046 tons of cumulative recyclables were collected from July through November
- 944 mattresses/box springs were collected from July through November
- 174 televisions were collected from July through November
- Issued permanent 21 landfill permits and 3 temporary permits for the month

## **TOWN PLANNER**

### **Town Plan and Zoning Commission Actions:**

#### TPZ Meeting on December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020:

- No actions were taken. The Commission discussed status of the outstanding bonds, outreach methods for property owners in vicinity of Newington Junction and Town Planner's report which outlined my observations (shown below) of regulatory issues within our Zoning regulations.

### **Town Planner Activities:**

#### TPZ Applications (approved, pending, and potential):

- Salsa Taqueria – liquor permit application, Special Permit
- New Meadow Elderly Housing – Site Plan application.
- Zoning regulations amendment for TOD – bulk area regulations
- Zoning map amendment – for Fenn Road property.

#### Prepare Agendas for and Attend Board and Commission Meetings:

- December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020: Town Plan and Zoning Commission
- Open Space Committee meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020: no quorum.
- Environmental Quality Commission meeting on December 10, 2020: discussed CT Sustainable Certification project.

#### Meetings:

- Affordable housing plan meeting with Glenn Chalder
- Zoom meeting with Tim Hollister re: Dakota project
- Zoom meeting with Chair of TPZ and Town Attorney to discuss 'pre-application meeting option' for the TPZ
- Zoom meeting with the Chair of EOC re: Ct Sustainable certification

### Grant-Related Project Activities:

- Met with Peter Testa and got oriented on the administration of Residential Rehab (“Small Cities”) Program. Approved two loans for roof replacement.

### **Our Zoning Regulations**

Several elements of our zoning regulations warrant a review and, in my opinion, significant revisions. I am aware that most of you know that our regulations are not particularly user friendly; we have sections that refer to other sections that then refer to still another sections. This, however, is less concerning than number of other, more substantial problems created by our regulations.

- Overregulation: Our regulations require special permits for far too many uses. For example, in B zone we allow 4 permitted and 13 special permit uses. Restaurants, brewpubs and brewpub restaurants, and certain, generally low impact service shops, such as printer shops or dry cleaner establishment require a special permit in business zone.

In Business Berlin Turnpike Zone, we allow 7 uses as of right, and 16 require special permit. This is our main commercial corridor and again, our regulations require that restaurants and gyms obtain special permit for an operation of a use that logically belongs here.

- Ambiguity: We need better definitions and more of them. This will be of a great value for the consistency and predictability of our decision making. I have two recent examples – contractor’s storage and food service establishment.

I haven’t done a deep dive into our regulations regarding the site development standards, however, from the visual assessment of existing development in our town, it appears that historically development standards were occasionally negotiated at the Staff and TPZ level. While this is sometimes appropriate, it can lead to ‘above and beyond’ requests from Staff or TPZ. It is my experience that clear and consistent site development requirements elevate the decision predictability which is preferred by applicants.

- Parking: Our parking ratios are too high, highest than in any of the communities I worked in prior. The higher than normal requirements are across board, regardless of the use. Furthermore, our Tax Assessor has told me that this is one of the main complaints he hears from people when it comes to the economic development in Newington.

### Miscellaneous

- Received and responded to number of phone messages and emails from citizens, local businesses, applicants, staff and elected/appointed officials.

## **TOWN ENGINEER**

### **Permits:**

- Reviewed contractor license applications (bond/insurance/agreement)
- Reviewed and approved 2 excavation permits:
  - Excavation = 2
  - Driveways = 0

### **Meetings:** Represented the Town:

- CRCOG transportation committee meeting
- TON public works meeting (engineering, planning, highway, parks, facilities)
- TON economic development meeting (engineering, planning, building, fire marshal, assessor)
- Town Council Meeting(s), as requested
- TON CIP, Planning and Zoning meeting(s), as requested
- Eversource/CL&P planning/construction meeting(s), as requested
- MDC planning/construction meeting(s), as requested
- CNG planning/construction meeting(s), as requested
- DOT planning/coordination meeting(s), as requested
- Project meetings with developers and engineers/architects, as requested
- Town Hall and Community Center Construction Project

- Meetings with residents/businesses

**Site Plan Review:** Reviewed plans and calculations for conformance with the Town of Newington Planning & Zoning Commission and Conservation Commission Regulations.

Reviewed site plans:

- 94 Holmes Road – Site plan review
- 80 Fenn Road – Site plan modification review
- 135 Fenn Road – Site plan review
- 890 Willard Avenue – Subdivision plan review
- 2414 Berlin Turnpike – Site plan review
- 324 Alumni Road – As Built survey review
- 55 East Robbins Avenue – Subdivision plan review
- 2897 Berlin Turnpike (Firestone) – Site plan review
- 4 Hartford Avenue – Site plan review
- 550 Cedar Street – Cedar Pointe - Site Plan review

**Public Works:** Assessed, investigated and inspected roads, parking lots, bridges, curb, sidewalks, traffic signals, dams, drainage, stone wall and other infrastructure issues throughout Town.

**Engineering:**

- Assisted public (residents, developers, contractors, realtors, title searchers, etc.) with Town engineering data (GIS, maps, etc.), ordinances, engineering procedures, building/property addresses, etc.
- Assisted public (residence and businesses) with drainage/flooding concerns and inspected portions of drainage system.
- Coordinated with Hartford and West Hartford in follow up to annual CTDEEP and NRCS inspection of portions of Piper/Mill Brook (South Branch Park River Flood Control System).
- Coordinated with MDC/CNG/ Eversource (CL&P) regarding utility projects in Newington.
- Coordinated with CDOT regarding projects in Newington.
- Coordinated with MDC regarding updating Town Ordinance 267 (hydrants).

**Engineering for Town Project:** Assisted Town Departments with in-house projects:

- Town Manager/Facilities: TON facilities evaluation by Owens - project coordination
- Town Manager: Pheasant Run – Drainage improvements – design and public outreach
- Facilities: New municipal building (library parking lot) – project coordination
- Facilities: New municipal building – Eversource Energy Incentive
- Facilities: Solar Energy Projects - project coordination
- Facilities: Senior Center Window replacement – grant/project management
- Highway (LOTICIP 2018) – Complete Street Project - Robbins Avenue and Maple Hill Avenue – CRCOG coordination, oversee design and public agency review
- Highway (LOTICIP 2020) – Complete Street Project - Maple Hill Avenue – grant application
- Highway: Kelsey Street & Christian Lane traffic signal – surveying and design services
- Highway: Design services - town facility paving preparation (FD5, Garfield Street parking lot)
- Planning: Garfield Street 2018 Community Connectivity Project – design services
- Planning: Main Street 2020 Community Connectivity Project – preliminary design services
- Planning: Elm Hill Business District Streetscape plan – New Britain Ave – conceptual design services
- Planning: Streetscape (phase 6A) – Lowery / Constance Leigh Drive – conceptual design services
- BOE: Former Bus Garage - engineering/environmental services for redeveloping remediated site
- Assessor: Firehouse #3 – Sketches and calcs for land acquisition

**BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

- A Building Permit was issued for signs for the boiling Soho / Cajun Restaurant to be located at 2391 Berlin Turnpike.

- An Electrical Permit and a Plumbing Permit were issued for the fit out of a retail showroom at 2631 Berlin Turnpike.
- An Electrical Permit was issued for the electrical work interior and exterior for Burlington to be located at 3491 Berlin Turnpike. Also, a Plumbing Permit was issued for this location.
- A Plumbing Permit was issued for the maintenance garage being built at 85 Faith Road, the Southfield Apartments.
- A Building Permit was applied to add outdoor / 4 season covered seating area at Ruth Chris Steak House located at 2513 Berlin Turnpike.
- All indoor Seminars our Inspectors attend for their continuing education credit were cancelled due to COVID-19. There are online classes.
- Building Department activity for the month of December was as follows: The Inspectors completed a total of 173 Inspections. They were: Electrical (10), Final (83), Foundation (2), Framing (8), Gas Line (19), Insulation (4), Mechanical (3), Plumbing (1), Pools (1), Roofing (1), Rough (38), Sill (1), Site Visit (2).
- The total number of Building/Renovation Permits issued / applied for the month of December was 151 producing a total permit value of \$2,463,559.00
- They are categorized as follows:

<b>TYPE OF PERMIT</b>	<b># OF PERMITS</b>	<b>VALUE OF PERMITS</b>
ADDITIONS /ALTERATIONS	25	425,955.00
DECK	1	300.00
DEMOLITION	2	0.00
ELECTRICAL	42	919,455.00
FENCE	0	0.00
FIRE SUPPRESSION / SPRINKLER	0	0.00
FOOTING / FOUNDATION	0	0.00
FUEL TANK	2	4,569.00
GARAGE / SHED	0	0.00
MECHANICAL	25	377,359.00
NEW COMMERCIAL	0	0.00
NEW MUNICIPAL	1	18,000.00
NEW RESIDENTIAL	0	0.00
PLUMBING	23	214,738.00
POOL	1	15,000.00
ROOFING / SIDING	13	161,764.00
SIGN	3	18,800.00
SOLAR	12	174,619.00
TENT	0	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>\$2,463,559.00</b>

The total Building income fees received in the month of December was **\$28,824.00**

The total fees for other income were as follows: Town Planning and Zoning (Applications/Publications) \$1210.00 Environmental \$240.00 Conservation \$0.00, Zoning Board of Appeals \$0.00, Copies, Books and Maps \$23.50 Driveway / Excavation \$175.00 Engineering copies \$0.00. The other total income is \$1648.500

Below is a comparison of the Permit Values for December 2020 and December 2019:

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
Value of Permits issued for December:	\$2,463,559.00	\$2,855,019.00
Fees for Permits issued for December	\$28,824.00	\$33,380.00
Other income Fees for December	\$1,648.50	\$1,390.50
Building Permits Issued for December:	151	139

Total Value of Permits and Permit Fees for the Fiscal Year:  
2020-2021

2019-2020

<u>Value</u>	<u>Permit Fee</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Permit Fee</u>
\$17,018,664.00	\$189,896.00	\$14,332,097.00	\$162,269.00

**HUMAN SERVICES**

- Rik Huggard attended a virtual training with the High 5 Adventure Learning Center called, “When in Doubt, Give Them Your Heart.” The key element of this training was the importance of facilitating experiential learning with a sincere identification and empathy with the participants – engaging with a “real” connection.
- Youth Services Coordinator and Part-time youth worker Zachary Banks have assisted in a major way with food bank and holiday gift program prep and facilitation. Also assisted with high volume of phone calls: doing wellness checks, scheduling appointments for clients picking up food and arranging delivery for those who need it, providing information and referral to numerous residents in need, volunteers and potential volunteers, and community donors.
- We are discussing how to move forward over the winter months and into the spring with the 5th grade Adventure Learning Program. Hybrid school sessions have been challenging to coordinate virtual presentations but the dialog remains open with the health teachers in both Middle Schools.
- Our High School Mentors participated in a Zoom meet & greet/brainstorming session during which current mentors and new mentor prospects attended. We are working on a more in-depth mentoring experience that involves mentors working with new mentors as a peer training method along with a community centered vision.
- In her role as Volunteer Coordinator Meskill maintained contact with older or compromised volunteers, recruited and scheduled volunteers for December gift distribution.
- Juvenile Review Board did not officially meet, 4 cases remain open.
- Coordinator Meskill attended a 5-hour Student Review Board meeting with the high school.
- Coordinator Meskill responded to a police referral re an eighteen-year-old female reporting parental domestic violence.
- Food Bank continued to meet the need of the community providing services: Grab & Go, Delivery and wellness checks to 131 households and 163 received food from Foodshare Mobile. We received assistance with 192.5 volunteer hours. Additionally, all staff assists with the ongoing operation of the food bank. This is all coordinated by Pam Wassik.
- Karen Smith continued to match sponsors with specific households requesting their holiday gift items. We provided gifts to 419 households comprised of 838 individuals. The entire community including: houses of worship, civic organizations, scout groups, Police: Stuff a Cruiser, Fire Department collection, schools, town employees, businesses and residents participate in donating to or volunteering for this program.
- All financial casework services continued doing phone interviews and referrals and receiving necessary documentation by email, text, or snail mail. We heard from many households whose income was reduced as a result of this health crisis and the closing down of many non-essential businesses. Clients continued to have difficulty initiating unemployment benefits. Caseworkers assisted with numerous housing issues including inability to pay rent, upcoming evictions, and homelessness. Non-COVID-19 related issues presented as well, such as referrals for home health services, need for conservators, and Medicare D selection.
- Director LaBrecque continued to serve as the Liaison for the Central CT Health District and the town by meeting with the CCHD director and providing the town manager with updates. LaBrecque also served as the town contact person to receive any complaints or questions regarding the implementation of Health & Safety requirements recommended by the state. There were several complaints received this past month. Director LaBrecque spoke with various businesses, reminding them of safety protocol instituted by the governor.

**December 2020 Statistics**

<b>Selected Programs</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Total This Month</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Total Last Month</b>	<b>FY 20-21 Cumulative Total YTD</b>	<b>FY 19-20 Cumulative Total YTD</b>
<b>Youth and Family Counseling Cases</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Clinical presentations</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>Youth &amp; Family Service Hours</b>	<b>28.5</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>JRB cases hearings/pending hearing</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>JRB Service hours:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Positive Youth Development</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>1328</b>
<b>Community Service</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>
<b># of hours completed</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>108</b>
<b>Challenge Course: Adult youth(outside)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>88</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>Information and Referral</b>	<b>617</b>	<b>1599</b>	<b>4407</b>	<b>5310</b>
<b>Social Casework Cases</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>420</b>
<b>Under 55 =</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Under 55 disabled =</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Over 55 =</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>298</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Social Casework Service Hours</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>120.25</b>	<b>766.75</b>	<b>581.25</b>
<b>Under 55=</b>	<b>44.5</b>	<b>42.5</b>	<b>208.5</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>Over 55 disabled and/or disabled</b>	<b>98.5</b>	<b>77.75</b>	<b>557.25</b>	<b>460</b>
<b>Food Bank Household visits</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>1235</b>	<b>865</b>
<b># bags of groceries distributed</b>	<b>1358</b>	<b>2094</b>	<b>10187</b>	<b>3655</b>
<b>Mobile truck</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>1078</b>	<b>590</b>
<b>Clothing household visits</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b># bags of clothes given</b>	<b>0* clothing closet ended</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Special Needs</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>73</b>

**SENIOR AND DISABLED CENTER**

- In consultation with the CCHD, the Center will remain closed through the remainder of the year with that decision reviewed at the end of December. Staff continue to provide essential services, especially food, as well as addressing the social isolation and lack of physical activity among members. The Center is offers high tech (virtual), low tech (telephone) and no tech (in person, mail etc.) opportunities for members. Additionally, the Center is using various means including Facebook, email, phone calls, newsletters, and materials distributed in meals and by mail to keep members informed.
- In collaboration with the CT Healthy Living Collective, CT Association of Senior Centers and with funding from AARP, the Center co-founded and co-coordinates a statewide virtual senior center. This month it offered, "It's a Wonderful Life: A Statewide Senior Center Holiday Bash". Featuring greetings from constitutional officers, seasonal music, story-telling and dancing it was a celebration of diverse cultures and traditions with more than 1,300 people registered.



- A Winter Wonderland parade was held on Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> with staff traveling to the homes of 40 members via Dial-A-Ride to deliver holiday cheer and treats.
- Stay Home. Stay Safe Bingo, offered each Tuesday and Thursday, Meditation Monday and, Boggle on Wednesdays were enjoyed by conference line. Game sheets are sent out ahead of time and participants call in to play.
- The American History Lecture Series, presented by Professor Jared Day, featured, “The Coming of World War II, parts 1 and 2” via Zoom on December 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>.
- A winter-themed craft class (gingerbread houses and holiday greeting cards) was held via Zoom on December 8<sup>th</sup>. Project materials were distributed to a sold-out group who enjoyed a relaxing afternoon of creativity and conversation over Zoom.
- Holiday festivities were wrapped up with a Holiday Trivia Contest on December 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Move to Improve continues to enroll participants and has increased to 46 in total. Staff followed up with each participant twice after enrolling and will offer a monthly conference call to support, educate and motivate participants.
- The Daily Call Sheet program continues with the original set of 4 volunteers calling 6 participants. New participants have enrolled and a volunteer training will be held in January to provide matches.
- The Live Well with Diabetes program, offered as a telephone workshop titled Active Living with Diabetes during the pandemic, wrapped up on December 21<sup>st</sup>.
- The Volunteer Shopper program continued through the month of December. Volunteers purchased \$897 in groceries in 25 trips. These groceries are purchased by the volunteers with gift cards provided by the Center and recipients are billed following delivery (by Dial-A-Ride) in a contactless and anonymous system. To date a total of \$15,875 worth of groceries have been purchased through the program.
- Food services continues to be a priority. 67 individuals received a total of approximately 1,150 hot meals in the month of December. There was a total of 80 Meals on Wheels routes in November (4 routes per business day) and volunteers delivered 39 of the routes with staff delivering the remaining 41 routes. Additionally, staff sort and pack all meals to reduce the exposure in the kitchen.
- “Grab and go” meals are distributed once a week, usually Wednesdays, replacing the daily congregate meal. Each week staff add puzzles, information, masks or other treats in the bags.
- Dial-A-Ride provided a total of 85 trips this month for 15 passengers. Service is still limited to non-urgent medical transportation. In addition, Dial-A-Ride delivered 60 congregate meals, 470 meals on wheels, 28 grocery orders, 52 food pantry orders and 68 program deliveries.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION**

### Recreation Division:

- Most Winter programs were scheduled to begin the first week in January and have been postponed due to COVID-19. A few programs are still being run virtually.
- Program information is currently being compiled for the Spring 2021 Program Guide.
- The virtual, “Night of Lights” was held on Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup> remotely from the new community center via Facebook Live! The broadcast ended up reaching over 5,0000 people. A special thanks to all those who helped, including our Parks & Grounds Division, Mayor DelBuono, Jay Bottalico, Chairman of the Board, our Volunteer Fire Departments, and the Police Department. Also, a special thank you to our sponsor Spring Brook Ice and Fuel Services for donating the ice and sponsoring the ice sculpture.
- On Thursday, December 10<sup>th</sup> Santa was able to visit 15 different Newington households that had entered into our Holiday House Decorating Contest. Then, on December 11<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>, Santa was able to visit 32 additional households with children who had participated in our Kindness Counts with Kids program. In just three days, hundreds of individuals were able to see Santa right in front of their very own doorstep! This event was a tremendous success and the Newington Parks and Recreation Department could not have done it without the help of the Newington Police Department!
- The Newington Parks & Recreation Department has continued the tradition of annually honoring businesses, volunteers and/or civic groups that help the Department better serve our residents with a, “Building a Strong Community Special Recognition Award.” Recipients of this year’s award were recognized virtually on December 9<sup>th</sup> for their contributions. This year’s recipients were Don Woods,

AARP/FitLot, Tom Tallard, and the Newington Masons. Recipients were recognized at the Town Council meeting virtually and then were presented with an award and Proclamation by Mayor DelBuono which was then sent in the mail.

#### Parks and Grounds and Cemeteries:

- Continued with leaf clean up throughout parks and school grounds
- Decorated Santa trailer in preparation of touring local neighborhoods
- Recycle shed for cans and bottles installed at Churchill Park to benefit local charities
- Began constructing new greenhouse at Parks garage
- Finished installing town Christmas decorations and helped Recreation staff with virtual tree lighting event
- Prepped all snow plows and salt spreaders
- Performed snow and ice removal during several weather events, including December 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> storm that left 16 inches of snow
- Helped Recreation receive and install new wrestling mats in Community Center
- Cleaned up old debris around Deming Young barn
- Performed several salting applications at school and government grounds
- Parks/Highway cleaned Churchill Park for Peter Lavery memorial

#### LIBRARY

- The library building continued to be closed to the public for the month of December as the COVID-19 infection rate increased locally. Same day curbside service, assistance by phone and email and virtual programming were some of the limited services that the library was offering. In an effort to reduce the number of people working in the building at the same time, staff was split into teams, working alternate days in the building and doing some remote work from home. Much of this work done from home would be work that was typically done during off-desk time, when staff was not working on the public service desks. This team approach also helped in case there was a COVID-19 outbreak in the library that affected one of the teams. The other team could still keep the library operating.
- Same day pick up for library curbside service Lucy-to-Go has been extremely popular. Staff is working hard to assist patrons by phone to pull library materials they request or help them choose materials they may like. In addition, staff is running the holds reports and pulling these items that have been requested online up to 4 times a day. All of this work to pull these requested materials as well as offering same day curbside pickup helps to get these items into our patrons' hands as quickly as possible. For the month of December there were 1,593 curbside pickups that allowed the library to check out 7,478 physical items to our patrons.
- Library Director Lisa Masten, Assistant Library Director Karen Benner and Business Manager Jennifer Hebert completed the proposed 2021-2022 library budget and submitted it on January 8<sup>th</sup> as instructed by the Town Manager.
- The Friends of the Library had another Facebook Live Book Sale with host Deanna Reney from Karma's Closet. People watch to see what books are available to sell and people can make arrangements to buy them. Children's books are still the most popular.
- Virtual programs for children offered 20 programs to 305 children and their caregivers. In addition to regular programs like the weekly digital story times, Sewing with Miss Sarah, Simple Science @ Home, and the Virtual Cookbook Club, a live virtual Tales to Tails and a special pre-recorded program Babies Love Art were presented. Several winter-themed Grab and Go craft project kits were offered through curbside pickup as well. Grab and Go craft kits are extremely popular and give parents and children something fun to do together.
- Teens and Adults were offered 12 virtual programs to 343 participants. Teen programs included Sew Simple for Teens and Holiday Edition of the Teen Grab & Go craft kits. Highlights of adult programs included four live Zoom program- Page Turners, a virtual book discussion on the book When the Crawdads Sing by Delia Owens, Movie Talk with Gil: Love and Mercy, Trivia Night with Jeanette and Karolyn and Suicide Prevention with Heather Hitchcock. Adults also had their own Grab & Go kits that included two separate packets of adult coloring pages and a ReDefined READS kit that contained supplies to make cork book page coasters. An instructional video was recorded and available from the library's website to show people how to make the boxes from home.
- Karen Benner, Children's Librarian Sarah Riordan, Business Manager Jennifer Hebert and Head of Community Services Michelle Royer continued to record, edit and upload videos to our YouTube

Channel to make available from the library website and give some of them to NCTV to be shown at designated times.

- Total circulation was 9,547. Circulation of digital materials was 2,069. 1,593 curbside service transactions were processed. Staff processed and pulled 2,195 holds on shelf to be processed for curbside pickups and interlibrary loans. Staff answered 3,201 reference questions during the month. Online databases that were popular this month included Consumer Reports, Morningstar and ProQuest. Usage of the children's online databases PebbleGo and PebbleGo Next was up in almost every category again the month. These databases are purchased to support elementary and middle school curriculums.
- In personnel news, the library had several staff changes. Katie Cornell, a part-time librarian in Circulation who recently received her MLS began her new fulltime position as the Circulation Supervisor on December 7<sup>th</sup>. Victoria Buttaro, a part-time Circulation Technician who recently started her MLS program began her new job as Digital Services Librarian on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Assistant Director Karen Benner is working with both Katie and Victoria to acclimate and help them train in their new positions. The library posted job openings for two part-time Circulation Technician positions and Part-time Substitute positions in the Children's and Circulation departments. The deadline for the application process was December 28<sup>th</sup>. Testing and interviews for this position will be held in January. Staff continues to work hard and offer great service to our patrons.
- In facilities news, there was a leak in the hallway to the children's program room and in the children's program room from melting snow and a tear in the rubber covering on the roof. This roof is old and has been problematic for a while. Facilities cleaned off some of the snow and addressed the tear as much as they could.