

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

To: Members of the South Windsor Town Council

From: Matthew B. Galligan, Town Manager

Subject: Town Manager's Report for 3/20/17 Town Council Meeting

Date: March 17, 2017

CT Prime

I want to update the Town Council on CT Prime which is our captive insurance policy for stop-loss insurance. We had a Board Meeting on March 16, 2017, and it is my understanding that the program is going very well. Next year, our rates will remain flat. I also want to talk about the conference I attended in early March for CT Prime. We learned about the many different facets and problem areas for health insurance. One major item we discussed was that the State of New Hampshire has a captive insurance program for stop-loss and general health policies between its municipalities. We found this very interesting, as if this was done on a regional basis in Connecticut, there could be more savings. Currently, the 13 communities that are a part of CT Prime are very happy with our progress, and we will continue to move this program forward as much as we can in order to bring savings and stability to our healthcare issues.

Snowstorm

I want to thank Public Works, first responders, Information Technology, and Emergency Management staff for a job well done during this week's snowstorm. They provided services to our community very quickly in what could have been a devastating storm. We had five medical assists in which Public Works conducted themselves efficiently and effectively, and I want to thank them for their quick response to these events. These events show that using GPS systems in our vehicles was a great investment as we could see where each truck was located while in the EOC, and we were able to quickly reroute the trucks to the scene. Again, I want to thank everyone for your participation and a job well done.

Special Budget Meeting

We will be having our first budget discussion during the Special Meeting on Monday, March 27. I think presenting the 2017/2018 Draft Budget during a Regular Meeting would be disingenuous as we have some very serious issues to discuss regarding the Governor's proposed budget. I would like to review those issues and discuss our strategic planning initiatives during this Special Meeting. I want to thank the Town Council and the Mayor for putting this budget meeting together. We should be concentrating only on the budget during this Special Meeting as we are facing some serious possible reductions in our revenue. I have been up at the Capitol many times, and I know there are various legislators who are looking to negotiate this budget. Each year, we are hit with devastating budget news, but somehow the budget gets worked out at the State level, and we are able to adjust accordingly to ensure municipalities can keep providing services to their residents. I am looking forward to presenting the 2017/2018 Draft Budget with various different scenarios that will need direction from the Town Council.

Due to the fact that we have to make some adjustments to the budget, I am not having department heads come before the Town Council to discuss their individual budgets. I think we need to take a more global look regarding taxes and services and then allow the Town Manager to work with his staff and the Board of Education to determine how we move forward in 2017/2018. I will go into further detail on March 27.

Diversity

While I was away, there was a Letter to the Editor concerning the cancellation of the Human Relations Commission program on February 27. I think we need to have further discussions regarding this issue, as there were things being said about our community that are far from the truth. Enclosed for you is information from the Board of Education, Human Resources, Human Services, and the Police Department regarding diversity training and other related items. Since I started in 1996, we have put together many programs to bring good information to our citizens about diversity and respect. Many of these programs are referenced in the attached handouts.

I want to discuss the CARE program for a moment. Dr. Wood and I created this program, and CARE stands for Community Accepts and Respects Everyone. This was a very strong program throughout the Town, Human Services, the Teen Center, and our school system.

I have also enclosed for you the Civil Immigration Detainers law as requested by Councilor Pendleton, as well as the Governor's letter to all heads of local enforcement agencies and municipal leaders regarding State Guidance for Law Enforcement in Connecticut concerning President Trump's Executive Order dated January 25, 2017.

I think the Town has been very accepting of people from all walks of life and faiths, and we have put together numerous programs over the years. Councilor Anwar has participated in some of these training programs for various South Windsor departments and schools to bring knowledge to our residents and employees.

Because of this, I felt it was very disrespectful to the Town Manager and Town of South Windsor to say that we do not accept diversity in this beautiful Town. The real issue was not diversity but the process that our Boards and Commissions have drifted away from over the past few years. I asked the Human Relations Commission to come before the Town Council to discuss the issue because the Commission has not had a quorum over the past couple of years. This is an issue under the FOI law. As I got more involved, I discovered more Boards and Commissions having trouble getting quorums for their meetings.

I think the Town Council needs to sit down with their two political parties to determine whether the Boards and Commissions are too large or start requiring people to ensure that they attend and participate in their respective Boards and Commissions. As I stated in my memorandum of February 27, 2017, I thought I was quite explicit regarding the email I sent to the Chairperson of the Human Relations Commission suggesting the program should be delayed until he follows the Charter by presenting the program to the Council. I mentioned that our Council liaisons have not been showing up to these

meetings as indicated by the minutes or attendance reports. If the Council liaisons were doing their work, this information would have been brought back to the Council, and it could have been discussed beforehand.

In order to resolve this issue, I had a meeting with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of both the Democratic and Republican parties to give them the information I discovered regarding the Board and Commission obligations, as well as liaison obligations. I thought this meeting went very well, and we discussed a new process moving forward. After that, the Town was criticized in Letter to the Editor on information that was totally inappropriate and unfounded.

Town staff with the help of the Council and Board of Education has worked very hard to ensure that our employees are well trained to help every single resident no matter their race, color, or national origin to ensure that their residency in South Windsor will be fulfilling and free of bias. Over the years, many staff and volunteers have opened up their arms and welcomed many diverse residents into our Town, and some have even opened up their homes. I cannot allow all of that good work to be painted differently by a few letters to the editor as they are not a reflection of a great town like South Windsor.

The real issue before is following the process. The Council has to be on board with the process to ensure that there is transparency in our programming. Anybody can come to a meeting and talk about the programs, give input, and get it implemented. I would like the Town Council to review the process with your Chairs in order to move these programs forward. They are good programs when done correctly and implemented in the best interests of the community.