Town of South Windsor

Town Manager's Report February 2016

Matthew B. Galligan Town Manager



March Lobbying Trip

On March 5th, I will be traveling to Washington D.C. along with other members of the Connecticut delegation representing CCM and other towns throughout the State of Connecticut. We are looking to lobby issues including the MS4 Permit. This Permit has been brought up in discussion on the Federal level, and it would be a tremendous cost to State municipalities. As I was intervener on this issue while President of CCM, I have been asked to attend with the delegation and state our case. Any changes on the Federal level should be put on hold until municipalities have finished the first round of requirements on the Permit.

Of course, there will be other issues that I will be lobbying for to make sure that Connecticut municipalities are protected. If CCM did not sue or intervene in the Permit matter, the Town of South Windsor would have seen a \$700,000 budget increase for wastewater management requirements.

Bond Sale

On February 3rd, we will be having a bond sale from 10:30am to noon concerning the Orchard Hill Elementary School and other completed projects. The \$21 million Orchard

Hill project would all be notes as the interest rate is extremely low, and no bonds will be taken out on that money unless required after the project is completed. I will report back to the Council regarding the outcome of that sale.

Ratings Agencies

The Town was reviewed by the ratings agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's. S&P has kept the Town at a AA+, which is the highest rating before AAA. Moody's has also kept our rating at a AA2. When the final reports come in, I will send them on to you. I have read the draft reports, and the one issue that Moody's always points out is the fund balance. They are more concerned about our fund balance than our pension and OPEB. The use of fund balance as a revenue in the current budget is not an appropriate use of that money. They would like to see the Town at a 10% range instead of 6% in order to maintain a AA2 rating. I pointed out that our other fund balances are greater than 10% and that our OPEB, pension, and health insurance funds are healthy. Moody's did mentioned that we have been contributing the full amount to OPEB since 2013, and it is a minimal liability with 15% funded in equity which almost nobody else in the State has done.

Motor Vehicle Assessments

Our Assessor, Charlie Danna, is retiring. He has had an enormous task in trying to get the current amount for the Town's motor vehicle assessments. He filed for an extension, but we are hoping he will have the information in the next few days in order to complete our assessment and sign off so we can determine the impact on the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 budget. It has been a trying task because many Connecticut municipalities have had a frustrating experience with the Department of Motor Vehicles. Some towns still do not have their numbers or cannot convert the motor vehicle registrations. We are fortunate enough that our staff was able to manually check the vehicles so that we can calculate the correct number.

Draft Budget 2016-2017

All department budgets are due to Finance next week. Once we have received the numbers, we will compile the budget. I will review the numbers, meet with department heads, and make decisions regarding priorities before presenting the Draft Budget to the Council before March 21st.

Council Audit

Chuck Warrington from Colliers International will be representing the Public Building Commission at Monday's Council meeting to review the Orchard Hill project. Employees from Blum Shapiro will be in attendance to discuss the Town's latest Audit. Ginny Macro from the Historic District Commission will present a report to the Council as well.

Development Rights

Debbie Reid sent information from David Panico to the Town Council regarding development rights under bond proceeds. It is allowable as the resolutions discuss development rights, conservation easements, etc. so you have the ability to use the last \$2 million bond authorization for such purpose. I believe there should be a policy or procedure to determine development rights as it has been a controversy in the past.

Matthew B. Galligan Town Manager

Police Department

Timothy M. Edwards Chief of Police

<u>South Windsor continues "Warm Communities" Initiative:</u>

In May of 2015 the South Windsor Police Department collaborated with Councilman Saud Anwar, Human Relations Commission Chair Charlie Margolis and Tata Consultancy Services to create the "Warm Communities" initiative. The Police Department was provided with 160 pair of hand warmers donated by Mr. Manoj Tripathy, on behalf of Tata Consultancy Services, Corporate Social Responsibility program.

We were fortunate to have had a relatively mild winter to this point, but as the cold weather arrived we began supplying the donated hand warmers to officers to hand out. The officers are distributing hand warmers when they encounter persons who have to stand in the cold or inclement weather for extended periods, perhaps waiting at a bus stop, or waiting for a tow truck because their car has broken down.

It is our way of trying to make people's day just a little easier and extend the message that South Windsor cares.

<u>Local Citizen helps Officers recover a</u> <u>stolen truck:</u>

On Thursday, January 21, 2016 Ofc. Dave

Gesualdi called a local man to follow up on a case investigation. While Ofc. Gesualdi was speaking to the man on his cell phone; our dispatchers broadcast a stolen car report. A box truck had been stolen from the mall in Manchester. The citizen overheard the radio broadcast on the phone and told Ofc. Gesualdi "that stolen truck is in front of me on I-84 in Hartford". Our dispatchers coordinated with the State Police and Hartford Police as the citizen followed the stolen truck into Hartford. The stolen vehicle was then stopped by officers and the suspect operating it was arrested.

This is a great job by all involved, and particularly by our local citizen who went above and beyond to help someone get their stolen truck back. (And using a hands-free cell phone device to speak with a police officer while driving is perfectly legal!)

One Warm Coat Continues:

The Carhartt Store at Evergreen Walk donated 13 more coats for the One Warm Coat Drive. Community Outreach Agent Jim Nicoletta has turned those coats over to the Cornerstone Clothing Bank in Rockville, CT. Carhartt also donated a box full of various new clothes that they considered seconds, which were given to the South Windsor

Community Center for distribution to the needy. Delta Airlines also turned over 6 coats for the Drive and they went to the Cornerstone Clothing Bank. Carhartt has donated a total of 50 coats to the One Warm Coat Drive.

Thank you all to our community partners for helping those in need.

www.onewarmcoat.org

2015 Traffic Safety:

We set a goal for 2015 of having 0 traffic fatalities in South Windsor. The entire department is committed to reducing injury crashes through education, enforcement and engineering. For the first time in several years no one died on our local roadways. Our officers were active in the regional traffic organization, Metro Traffic Services (MTS), which hosted operations in and out of town. We have worked with the school system and social media to educate new and experienced drivers. And, we keep an awareness of engineering concerns to constantly improve our roadways.

In 2014 we had two fatal accidents that killed South Windsor residents, both involved drunk driving.

Our new challenge for 2016 will be to keep up the good work and continue our safety record.

Public Works Department

Michael J. Gantick
Director of Public Works

Street Services

Last year the buzz word for the winter was, "Bombogenesis", it was the latest new way to describe that conditions were right for significant snow events to stall out and deliver large amounts of snow. The year before last winter it was "polar vortex", a way to describe that it's cold out! This year it is an El Nino year and it's been mild and on the warm side, compared to last year. Pretty spot on with the prediction from the national weather service, but the Farmers Almanac blew it, unless you look just to the south of us. The reality of what old man winter can dish out isn't to far away. Washington D. C. is buried in snow and the sight of their situation brings back some of the not so long ago memories of the blizzard of 2013. We are better prepared and have made some equipment improvements and purchases to aid us in our efforts in the advent of our next blizzard. We average 14 winter storms a year and we receive an average of 42" of snow annually. We have had 3 snow events so far this year and our current salt use for this winter season is approximately 472 tons of salt. Let's hope the rest of the winter season is mild. The good news is the amount of daylight is increasing every day and spring will arrive here in 49 days!

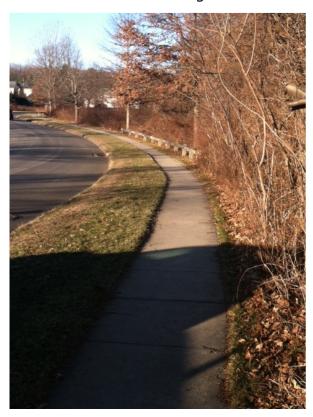
The Leaf Program was completed December 7th. We picked up more cubic yards of leaves this year than in any other year since the inception of the program. This year's curbside collection netted 27,087 cubic yards of leaves. We did take note that the resident drop of site did not bring in as many leaves as in seasons past. Perhaps it was the mild fall and great weather that allowed the residents to rake more leaves to the curb. The season started off very dry and we had 3 trucks continuously pre-wetting the leaves to keep the dust down. Perhaps the light, dry fluffy leaves also contributed to the increase amount of cubic yardage. We spent 24 full crew days picking up the leaves. The program was a huge success and was truly a team effort by all.

We have spent a great amount of time and fiscal resources on pothole patching prior to the winter season. We also have recycled some of our left over waste black top product into usable hot mix this winter with a pavement hot box recycler we purchased with some State funds. This equipment will help us to not waste expensive material in the cool months where the product cools very quickly. The hot box maintains black top at a temperature that is recommended and workable. We have been able to make better

lasting repairs. We also have found a source for hot recycled mix that experimenting with. The crew has also used the hot box to warm up old cold patch to 100 degrees which makes it more pliable and workable. They are reporting that much of the holes we have patched are holding. Mild frost conditions were present last month and a sudden warm up and thaw is predicted for the first week of February. If a deep freeze occurs followed by freeze and thaw cycles and a rainy spring we will have all the right ingredients for pothole problems. Let's hope it stays mild!

We have been cleaning up brush in many drainage areas. We are also in the process of notifying residents that we intend to trim low lying branches that come in contact with our plow trucks as well as school buses and trash trucks. Notices have been mailed out to property owners who have trees or brush impacting our operations and they have been asked to contact the Tree Warden if they have any issues or concerns.

We also are nearing the completion phase of a tree trimming and removal project on Newberry Road. We have partnered up with Eversource Energy and our Contractor Distinctive Tree and Gardens, of South Windsor. Over 30 trees were identified to present a potential hazard to the road, and impact electrical services. We posted them to be removed. The remaining trees were trimmed and pruned for health, safety, and our standard of 14' of road clearance. Our crew will follow up with light tree removal and brush clearing. We also have cleaned up Vibert Road and removed numerous dead trees and invasive vines along the roadside. This will allow us to mow and maintain the area in a passable safe condition. Our next trimming and removal projects will be on Foster Street Ext. and Beelzebub Road. This proactive approach improves road safety and also helps preserve our existing roadside urban forest. We are saving money in the long run because damaged trees will meet their demise sooner if nothing is done.



The crew also performed a vegetation removal project on Talcott Ridge Road at the request of the neighborhood association. Overgrown invasive vines, leaning, dead, or hazardous trees, briers and brush growing into the side walk area and road would only lead to costly removal efforts down the road.

We went in and cleaned up the area. The neighborhood association is partnering up with us and will maintain the area for the future. Projects like this are a win, win for everyone!



We have many pieces of small equipment that need to get cleaned, serviced and readied for the spring, summer and fall construction season demands. Maintainers have been performing seasonal or periodic preventative maintenance such as oil filter replacements and changes, stabilizing. We have found this to be a very beneficial task critical to our success during the construction seasons.

Winter washing maintenance to our snow and ice control fleet is a top priority. We have aggressively stepped up our efforts in the desalting and washing of our fleet and equipment. It is a priority for this Division.

We have always spent a great amount time and effort in cleaning and washing the trucks. Over the last three years we started using salt neutralizing products to clean, and products which encapsulating actually prevent the salt from adhering or sticking to our trucks. Each truck that we own has the encapsulating solution applied to the frame as well as to some of the components that can corrode. Our Fleet Division has taken a proactive approach in protecting the fleet and we will save time and money in the long run. We are trying to extend the useful life cycle of our trucks and equipment. We will continue to improve our methods and look to maintain the fleet to the best of our ability.

We cleaned and hauled away to area recycling facilities all of our construction wastes. Hundreds of tons of excavated black top and concrete must be removed from the property and recycled on an annual basis. All of our construction products and materials have been consolidated and inventoried.

Composting of leaves is underway. The compost from the 2014 leaf collection program will be auctioned off in the spring. Our compost has sold for as much as \$13,000.00. Towns are required by the State to recycle leaves. We have been recognized for our efforts and received awards in past years for the outstanding composting program we have.

Mark Owens Street Services Manager



Human Services Department

Adult & Senior Services

Andrea Cofrancesco, Director of Adult and Senior Services

Property Tax Relief

Elderly and disabled homeowners who qualify can apply for reduced property taxes on their homes between *Feb.1-May 15, 2016.* This year's income limits are \$35,200 maximum for an individual and \$42,900*for a couple. *Local option allows up to \$4,000 higher income than regular program. After your taxes are done, you can make a quick calculation by adding your adjusted gross income and your social security to see if you might be eligible. For more information call 860-648-6361.



Income Tax Preparation

AARP Tax-Aide is a free program for low and middle income taxpayers with special focus on taxpayers age 60 and over. Tax-Aide workers will be available at the Community Center on

Thursdays and Fridays from 9 AM to 12 noon beginning Thursday, February 4 and continuing through Friday, April 8 by appointment: 860-648-6361 ext.335.

Shown is a volunteer assisting a senior with their taxes.

Outreach Efforts Continue

Staff continues to educate the community on the variety of services offered to low income families and older adults. Recently we spoke to the letter carriers at the SW Post Office, as often they are the only people older adults see every day. Carriers were asked to alert Human Services staff of any concerns they may have for people on their route and caseworkers would make every attempt to educate them on services available. Two on the spot referrals were given to staff at this time and brochures will be delivered to many more. This talk was in addition to five senior housing sites and the police department. Next up: making contact with local doctor's offices.

Intergenerational Animal Show on the Go!

South Windsor Adult and Senior Services will be presenting a fun and educational intergenerational traveling animal show at the community center on **Thursday, February 11** at **11:00** AM. *FREE* Please register: 860-648-6361 ext. 335.

Hall's Arrow Indoor Archery

In an effort to offer a variety of different programs to attract new people, we will be heading for archery lessons on **Tuesday**, **March 1!** Beat the Winter Blues and enjoy some archery in Manchester at Hall's Arrow Archery Range, the first indoor archery range in New England! We will get to spend one hour on their shooting range. Instructors will be available to provide help and answer any questions that come up, and all equipment is provided. Lunch first at **Shady Glen's! Cost: \$18**, includes time at the archery range and transportation, bring money for lunch. Bus departs the center at **1:15 PM** and returns approximately **4:30 PM**.



Parks and Recreation staff brought over food the Human Services Department is storing at Avery Street Church. Holiday time is when the majority of the food is donated to the Food Bank, so every month we take a shipment over to restock the shelves. The food has historically gotten us through April or May, when we will be asking for donations again. *A HUGE thanks to the Parks crew for their help!*







Youth & Family Services

Elizabeth Langevin, Director of Youth and Family Services



Connecticut

Legislative

January 2016 On January 11th, Youth &

Youth & Family Family Services hosted the Eastern Chapter of Youth Service Bureau's Breakfast. Youth Services Directors from South Windsor, Tolland, Coventry, East Hartford, Stafford, Andover, Hebron, Marlborough and Vernon invited state legislators to discuss the work that youth service bureaus do and the importance

Parent Education and Support

of the current funds that we receive from the

State Department of Education.



January was a busy month for SWAN. We had an opportunity for parents to meet and

talk about the joys and challenges of raising children with learning differences. We offered a Triple P information night for parents and caregivers. Parents were able to get more information on the various levels of Triple P Positive Parenting and have a chance to talk with one another. In addition to our regular Grandparents Raising Grandchildren meeting, SWAN offered a program on Craniosacral Therapy for children and adults on the Autism spectrum.

In February, the Mother/Daughter Circle will begin. This is a 6 week program which focuses on strengthening the mother daughter bond. We will also offer a program on Qi Gong, which is a sensory therapy parents can learn and use with their children at home.

School Outreach

In celebration of National Mentoring Month, the SW Mentoring Program held an after school event on Wednesday, January 13th at Timothy Edwards Middle School. Mentors and their students enjoyed an afternoon of fun activities, snacks and games. It was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to make connections and to celebrate the mentors who are making a difference in the lives of young people.



Teen Center

In January, with the help of our Human Services Intern, Becky Mills, the Teen Center hosted the first of a two part series to help high school students with job or college searching. In the first three sessions, nine students participated. Part two of the series will begin in March 2016, where students will follow up on goals they made in January and learn skills to help with resume writing and interviews. This is an open group, which means students can participate in the group at any time.

The high school drop in days continued to have about 30 visits per day. During the month of January we explored important topics about personal safety and spreading awareness about Human Trafficking and Drug and Alcohol facts vs. myths, while still allowing plenty of down time for playing the Wii and hanging with friends.

So far this month, we had **65** visits to the Teen Center on Middle School Nights. The fun continues each week on Fridays 6-9pm with new themes and fun games like South Windsor Trivia, Wii Dance competitions and movie night!

Our second round of offering Tuesdays at the Teen Center for middle school students began (as part of TEAM- Timothy Edwards After-School Matinee Program). Fifteen students signed up to take a bus from TE and spend six afternoons at the Teen Center.

Students will participate in various activities, games and crafts in a smaller, structured setting.

In February, both high school and middle school students will have the opportunity to spread kindness in the community by participating in various activities and crafts in recognition of Random Acts of Kindness Week (2/14/16-2/20/2016). Our high school students will also have the opportunity to participate in activities that celebrate diversity and acknowledge some influential people in our world who have spread kindness and inspiration through their actions and words.

Youth & Family Counseling

In January, we hosted a parent/student night about how to manage test anxiety. This was planned for high school students, the week before midterms.

Our Youth Counselor and Parent Educator provided information and support to both the students and parents.

Please check out our Parent Talk Newsletter, available on the town website for more upcoming events!



Parks & Recreation Department

Raymond Favreau

Director of Parks & Recreation

John Caldwell, Jr. Superintendent of Parks

"Discover the Benefits!"

MONTHLY REPORT - February 1, 2016

Ryan Kane Asst. Director of Parks & Recreation

Park & Recreation Commission (PARC) – The next PARC meeting is Wednesday, Feb. 10th at 7:30pm in the Sprenkel Room of the Town Hall, at which they will continue work on the master plan.

The South Windsor Walk & Wheel Ways (SWW&WW) sub-committee meets next on Wednesday, Feb. 3rd at the Community Center, conference room 206 at 7pm. They are continuing their work on action plans for potential public access to the Eversource power line corridors for cross-town trails connecting the existing Jacques Lane trail to Pleasant Valley Road. They will finalize the laborious task of re-applying to the League of American Bicyclist to elevate their bicycle friendly community designation from bronze to silver. The application deadline is February 15, 2016.

The South Windsor FOOD Alliance (SWFA) sub-committee will conduct a series of seven Winter Healthy Food Workshops on Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:30pm at the South Windsor Public Library Friends Room. Topics include Plant-Based Nutrition, Gardening fro

Wildlife, Composting, Raw Foods, Hydroponic Farming, Native American Gardening and Making Your Own Ravioli & Sauce. Go to www.swfood.org for more details.

Like us on Facebook - The number keeps growing - we are now "liked" by 1,133 people! Won't you like us too at south windsor parks & recreation and check out the awesome videos posted? Also, please follow us on Instagram too at SWPRD06074!!

Special Invitation to Councilors - SAVE THE DATES: Thursday, February 11

Timothy Edwards Middle School is the place to be! Experience the amazing illusions of magician David Garrity at 10 am brought to you by co-sponsors Wood Memorial Library and the South Windsor Community Women's Club as the annual Ann Masi Memorial Children's program with free admission. Then from 11am to 2pm bring the entire family to make your own sundae in the company of many of your favorite cartoon characters like Stuart & Dave from the Minions, Marshall from Paw Patrol, Kung Fu Panda and Buzz Lightyear as well as our very own bear mascots Ben E.

and Bett E. Fits! On **Friday, February 19**th join SW Walk & Wheel Ways for a 1.5 mile family-friendly walk under a full moon on the trails at Nevers Park starting at 7:15pm at the Rotary Pavilion. End the evening sipping on hot chocolate around the fire pit at the Pavilion! As always, we offer all members of the Town Council an open invitation to visit any of our 350+ recreation programs or park facilities throughout the year. Please give us a call and we will even escort you!

RECREATION DIVISION
"Feel great – recreate!"

Before & After School Program – February enrollment is at yet another all-time high of 343 – up 7 registrants from January! We are proud to say that this has become our largest, and one of our most popular, ongoing programs. An impressive 19.4% of all elementary school children participate in our

4th R program (that's 343 out of the 1,772 total elementary school enrollment). Kudos to Keri Apt and her incredible staff!

Veterans Memorial Park — In advance of our budget submission we felt it important to notify you of some preliminary upcoming changes we are proposing for operation of the pools at VMP for the 2016 summer season. (1) We will prohibit water guns as they tend to create behaviors that annoy patrons. (2) Until such time as we can create a dedicated "grilling zone" (which is a project on the drawing board) we will curtail the use of charcoal and gas grills on park grounds. (3) Weekend daily admission rates for non-residents will increase from \$9 to \$12 for adults and from \$6 to \$8 for children.

Youth Basketball Leagues – The Boys & Girls 8th Grade Travel teams will play Ellington at the Basketball Hall of Fame in





Our Challenger basketball program provides the opportunity for local youth with special needs to experience basketball with a partnered volunteer "buddy" from the SW High School boys' and girls' varsity basketball teams at the Eli Terry gym on Saturday mornings.

Springfield, MA on Friday, February 5th. This annual incentive for just the 8th graders caps off for many a four year commitment to the program and includes an exclusive tour of the Hall for an exciting insight into the history of the game they love to play! The four Boys Travel teams trek to Queens, NY for their annual visit on Saturday, Jan. 30. This 20+ year tradition has become an integral part of our program. Participants and their families in the Boys & Girls Beginners Division will enjoy our Annual Basketball Extravaganza on Sat., Feb. 20th from 6:30 to 8:30pm at the Timothy Edwards Middle School Gym. After the traditional awards ceremony attendees will enjoy the magical, musical, acrobatic performance of Brison Lang.

PARKS DIVISION "Caring for South Windsor's Growing Needs"

January Activity Highlights:

- Athletic Fields & Grounds:
 - o No report out of commission for the winter
- Parks & Open Space:
 - Replenished wood chips at the large dog area of the Bark Park.
 - Long grasses cut at the Buckland Road islands
 - Began clearing deadwood and invasive brush around the pond at Rye Street Park as part of our on-going park beautification efforts. The goal is to re-create this water feature into an

- attractive and useful part of the park again.
- After a surprisingly warm December that invited extended use of the outdoor volleyball and tennis courts, we finally removed the nets for the winter.
- o Fence repairs, stump and grill removal accomplished at VMP.

Projects:

- o Memorial Wall Project at VMP the concrete foundation was formed and poured by local contractors with many hours of labor and equipment donated. Once set, the foundation was backfilled by parks crew members. The goal is to have the project complete in time for a Memorial Day ceremony & dedication. The Parks Division will continue to assist numerous local contractors who are providing hours and hours of in-kind contributions.
- o Ayers Road Softball Field crew members assembled and delivered the new five-row spectator bleachers to the site. Dogout roof tarps and accessible paths are now the only remaining items to re-commission the field this spring.
- o Barton Property Project The initial phase of tree clearing, stump removal and rough grading is now complete. Part of the intended natural buffer of existing trees south of the property entrance along Brookfield Street failed to safely survive the site disturbance

and as such required their removal through a combination of in-house and contracted efforts. A man-made earthen berm with new tree plantings will be put in its place as soon as possible. Affected neighbors were contacted and assured that corrective measures were in the works. Phase two, for finish grading and seeding and phase three for a gravel ring road will go out to bid this winter for projected work in Spring 2016.

o Continued work on bridges and trails at Rye Street Park for the future mountain bike trail we hope to open this spring.

• Other:

- o With State DOT permission, we pruned trees and removed invasive brush from the triangular island between Deming and Oakland Roads to create a more inviting entrance into town from Manchester.
- Successfully responded to Storm Anna (Jonas) along-side the crew from Street Services.
- Transported dozens of cases of nonperishable food items for the Human Service Dept. Food Bank.

The line of pine trees to the left (south of the property entrance) were to serve as a buffer along Brookfield Street until they began to uproot following the clearing of the Barton Property. For safety reasons, they were all removed and will be replaced with an earthen berm and new trees.



Installation of the foundation was step one of the new Memorial Wall project at VMP



Step two - Back-filling the Memorial Wall foundation by parks crew members





Spruced up island at Deming and Oakland entering town from Manchester

Beginning to see the pond at Rye Street Park once again!



Crew members clearing invasives along the gravel lot by the basketball court at Rye Street Park

February 2016 Town Council Meetings and Events

Meetings

Monday, February 1, 2016 7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting Council Chambers

Tuesday, February 16, 2016
7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting
Council Chambers

Holidays

Friday, February 12, 2016

Town Offices Will Be Closed in Observance of Lincoln's Birthday

Monday, February 15, 2016

Town Offices Will Be Closed in Observance of Washington's Birthday

Layout by Ashley Summers, Executive Secretary to the Town Manager

