



State of the Town *of Stratford*

Mayor Laura R. Hoydick

March 27, 2019

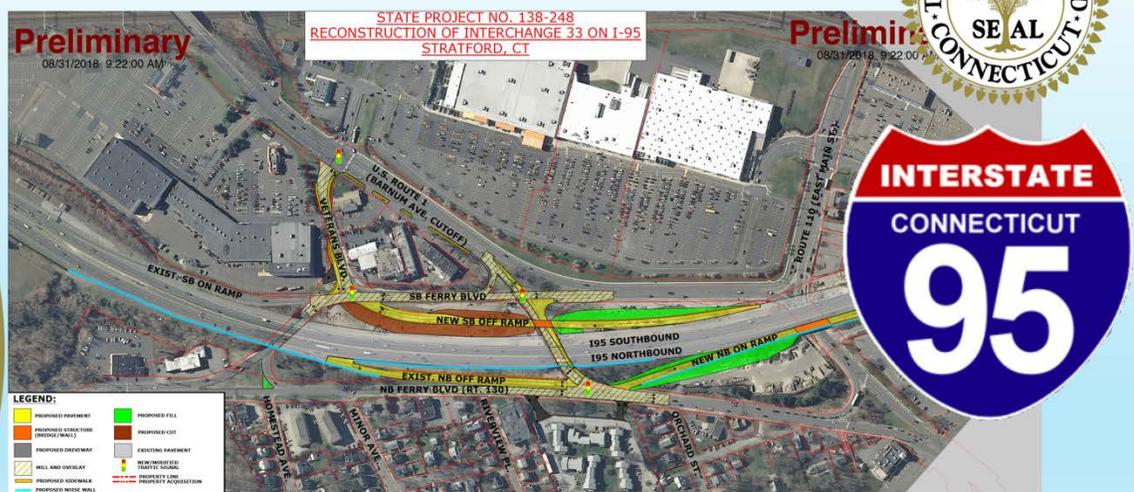
***Mayor Laura Hoydick
State of the Town Address
March 27, 2019
Oronoque Country Club, Stratford, Connecticut***

Good afternoon. Thank you for your interest in Stratford's state of the town address. I want to thank the Stratford Chamber of Commerce, Chairman Chris Pia, and the Bridgeport Regional Business Council, President and CEO Dan Donofrio for hosting this event. Thank you to the event's corporate sponsors, Ashcroft, Inc., People's United Bank and ServPro of Milford-Orange-Stratford and a special thank you to all of you for joining me today.

Stratford is a vital diverse community that is moving in a positive direction. The progress we have made is due to our focus on working collaboratively for the benefit of Stratford. When the Town Council and I were elected, we promised to work civilly and professionally to move Stratford forward, and I'm happy to report we are doing just that. We, along with our employees and partners collaborate and work together to improve the quality of life for our residents and the economics for our taxpayers.

Present today are Council Chair Jim Connor, 1st District Councilman, Chris Pia, 9th District Councilman Bill O'Brien and 10th District Councilwoman Laura Dancho. This council has achieved their fiduciary responsibility in a timely manner, by, approving budgets and setting corresponding mill rates that have lowered taxes. They have improved town policies that promote environmental sustainability and reduce littering, taken advantage of low-interest borrowing to improve infrastructure and embraced economic development opportunities. In addition to an affective, relevant council, I am blessed to work with a professional, experienced and proactive staff whose expertise is greatly valued by me and critical to the functionality of town operations. My chief of staff, Mike Downes, Chief Administrative Officer, Chris Tymniak and Economic and Community Development Director Mary Dean and Public Safety Director Larry Ciccarelli are key to how we function and how we present to the tax payers and to our neighbors. To that end, let me start with some highlights in the areas of Economic and Community Development.

Exit 33 Interchange – I-95



CONSTRUCTION TO START SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2019

Exit 33 interchange on Interstate 95: I just received word that the project was delivered for DOT contract processing on March 20th and is on schedule for a late May Advertising date. The anticipated start of construction is September/October of this year. Within the foreseeable future there will be a

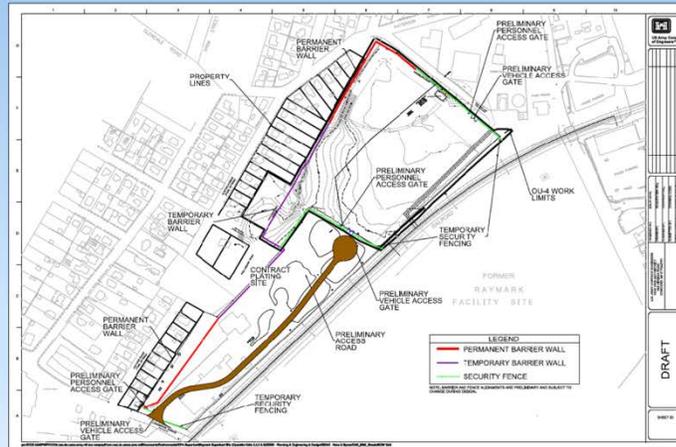
north bound entrance ramp and a south bound exit ramp near one of the most up and coming economic centers in Stratford.



Sidney Street: Located off East Main Street, Sidney Street, and Urstadt Biddle Dockside, LLC holding, will be redeveloped into a Chipotle Restaurant, Starbucks and self-storage facility.

EPA Raymark Remediation

Temporary and Permanent Barriers Location



Project currently underway.

- Barrier construction to begin May 2019
- Barrier and haul road completion expected Fall 2019

EPA Raymark Remediation: Visible activity is increasing surrounding the cleanup of the federal Raymark Superfund Site and the adjacent Contract Plating Site. The clearing and grading activities began on the Raybestos Memorial Field Property (Frog Pond Lane) and the former Contract Plating Property. The clearing was conducted to prepare for the installment of temporary and permanent barriers designed to buffer the residential properties on Cottage Place, Clinton Avenue and Patterson Avenue from future construction and remediation activities. Following construction of the barrier, EPA will be planting new trees and shrubs.

Construction of the temporary and permanent barriers is anticipated to begin in May, followed by construction of a haul road through the former Contract Plating Site at 540 Longbrook Avenue. This haul road is necessary to keep truck traffic out of the residential neighborhood during construction and remediation activities. Completion of the barrier and haul road construction is expected by early Fall 2019.

The remediation plan for the Contract Plating site is currently being reviewed by EPA. The Town's contractor, Tighe & Bond, and EPA have been coordinating the

two separate cleanup efforts.

Sikorsky & Route 110 Realignment



SCHEDULED TO BEGIN LATE SPRING 2019 AND BE COMPLETED BY END OF CALENDAR 2019



Sikorsky Route 110: This project realigns signal lights and traffic flow to ease the congestion currently experienced on Route 110 and Oronoque Lane. The project is scheduled to begin in late spring and completed by the close of 2019. All 4 lanes will remain open for the duration of the project with exception of overnight constructions for a few weeks. An additional crosswalk will be added for easier pedestrian crossing to the bus stop. The light will be removed at the Sikorsky entrance and curbing will improve coming off the Merit ramp & at Oronoque.

Exit 32 – West Broad & Linden



PROJECT SCHEDULED TO BEGIN SUMMER 2019

Exit 32: will get a facelift and a much needed redesign improving the exiting from I-95 South and the means of access and traffic from West Broad and Linden Street. This project will start this summer.

Stratford High School



PHASE 1

PHASE 2



PHASE 1 COMPLETED LAST FALL, PHASE 2 UNDERWAY

Stratford High School this \$126M project commenced with phase 1, which includes a new school structure, is completed on King Street. Phase 2 includes

modifying the 1920 original structure and both buildings, connected by a sky-walk will total 233,250 square feet. These modern, updated buildings will improve functionality and flow of our civic area.

Center School Property



BUILDING DEMO COMPLETED - T.O.D. DESIGNS FROM PROPOSALS THIS SPRING

Center School building has been razed and the town will be entertaining Transit Oriented design from proposals in the spring.

Complete Streets



- \$200,000 in funding awarded to complete technical designs
- Enhance access and safety for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists
- Goals include:
 - Reduce four lanes to three lanes with a two-way center turn lane
 - Add buffered bicycle lanes & expand east and west sidewalks
 - Upgrade to high viz intersection crossings and sidewalk ramps with warning texture
 - Add bicycle intersection markings, plaza space, site furnishings and bike racks

Complete Streets Overview: is currently being designed and to begin in 2020.

\$200,000 in funding has been awarded to complete the technical design of complete streets improvements along a portion of Main Street from Barnum Avenue, south to Harvey Place. This project was one of several identified as high-priority in the Town's 2017 Complete Streets Plan, and is intended to enhance access and safety for bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists. Goals for the engineered design phase include;

Reduce four lanes to three-lanes: northbound, southbound, and a two-way center turn lane.

Add on-road, buffered bicycle lanes, expand east and west sidewalks to 10-foot wide multi-use paths, curb extensions with green infrastructure, and parking in Stratford Center.

The project will include upgrades to high visibility intersection crossings and sidewalk ramps with warning texture, bicycle intersection markings and plaza space, site furnishings, and bike racks.

Stratford Ave. Roundabout



TOWN TO SUBMIT
PRE-DESIGN TO
DOT IN 2019

Stratford Avenue Roundabout the Town will submit the pre-design to DOT in 2019.

Shakespeare Theater Property



COMMUNITY
WORKSHOPS
UNDERWAY TO
DETERMINE
FUTURE OF THE
SITE

Shakespeare Property: With the State Fire Marshal investigation concluding soon, the Town is moving forward with listening and community sessions about what to do with the property. The 13-acre site was once home to the historic

Shakespeare Theatre that was destroyed by fire in January of 2019. Since that time the demolition and property clean up has been managed by our Public Works department.

The Shakespeare property task force is hosting the first community workshop on April 1st at Birdseye Complex from 6 pm – 8pm. The 2nd Community workshop is scheduled for April 24th from 7 pm – 9pm at Boothe Memorial Park

In between the Community evening meetings there will be 3 additional meetings that will cater to the following groups:

Seniors will be meeting at the Baldwin Center on April 10th from 12:30 – 2:30.

Business/Art groups will be meeting on April 23rd from 7:30 am. – 9:30 am at Connecticut Distributors Inc.

Student groups – sometime in April.



Opportunity Zones- Stratford’s Census 804 was designated in 2018 as an Opportunity Zone. Opportunity Zones” in Connecticut are to attract private investment to improve economic growth, community wealth, business

development, housing opportunities and infrastructure while creating significant jobs in the most challenged but promising areas of Connecticut.

Stratford Army Engine Plant



CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN 2020

Stratford Army Engine Plant: A great deal of time, effort and money has been spent to plan and strategize the redevelopment of the Army Engine Plant. Prior to this year, the Army and its consultants were engaged with DEEP in identifying and quantifying the magnitude and extent of tidal sediment contamination and future remediation, including the exploration of suitable dredging methods and disposal options. Over the past year, the Town of Stratford, Health, ECD, Conservation departments, have worked closely with DEEP to negotiate a 24 hour/7 day a week dredging schedule of the mudflats to speed up the cleanup from 4 to 5 years to 1 to 1.5 years. On behalf of the Army BRAC Office, USACE has implemented a focused feasibility study to develop alternatives for the remediation of the contaminated tidal flats and Outfall 0008 adjacent to the site. The volume of sediment requiring remediation is approximately 300,000 cubic yards. To expedite the schedule, the design of the dredge prisms was set to begin in January 2018. The Final Decision Document was scheduled for completion in December 2018 with construction scheduled to begin in 2020.

We now need to find a solution to the current stalemate between Army BRAC and the developer PSR. Unfortunately they are still in discussions regarding on-site disposal of dredged material and options to move the remediation and redevelopment projects forward. Until some of these issues are resolved, USACE engineering and design work continues to be on hold. We are working with our federal and state delegation to remove the log jam.



We have welcomed several new businesses to Stratford: (16)

Craft & Sprout
 Area 2 at Two Roads
 Big Jim's Galley
 BrickBox
 Paradise Psychic
 Oar and Oak Restaurant
 Coufar Kitchens
 CT Dance Conservatory
 DaVita Dialysis
 Dream Kitchens
 Health Care Advocates International
 Soundview Media
 TD Vietnam Palace

Sadie's Place Diner
Athletic Brewing

We are thankful for our long standing major employers and tax payers:

United Illuminating
Sikorsky Aircraft
Southern CT Gas Company
Lockheed Martin
Second Avenue Development LLC
Stonybrook Gardens Co-Op
Ursadt Biddle Dockside LLC
Avalon at Stratford LLC
Kramont Operating Partnership LP
UP Railside LLC
Wal-Mart Real Estate Business Trust
Home Depot
Ashcroft Inc.
Lord Chamberlain Realty LLC
Stratford Development

To correspond with our increased development our building permits and values have grown from 69 permits - \$18,488,565 through 2017 to 75 permits -at a value of \$28,203,402 in 2018. I am thankful to Brian Donovan and department for delivering excellent customer service to our clients.

Town Offices & Departments



We continue to utilize technology to improve service to our residents and businesses. Quality Data is providing a new and improved tax portal that affords reminders about paying your taxes. ViewPoint online permitting is an all-in-one citizen service platform for permitting, licensing, inspections, and enforcement and has been met with great reviews from residents and property owners.

The Town Clerk's offices, under the direction of Susan Pawluck, and VitalChek have recently partnered to provide the option of requesting vital records online. This service also allows for 24 hour turnaround for those needing a vital certificate immediately.

We have completed our first year with our new integrated land-record indexing system, which enables the Town Clerk's office to be on the "cutting-edge" of newer state-of-the-art technology.

In addition, Stratford is one of a handful of Towns in the State of Connecticut to offer online dog license renewal for the convenience of town residents.

Planning & Zoning



- Stratford accepted into FEMA's CRS Program for its efforts in protecting Town residents from storm/flood-related events
- Stratford has secured a CRS Class 8, making it one of the highest scoring municipalities in the State of Connecticut.
- The classification will become effective for Stratford residents starting May 1, 2019.
- By securing a Class 8, Stratford residents should expect an average annual savings of \$141 per NFIP policy, totaling \$204,000 in community-wide savings.

Planning and Zoning: Jay Habansky, Zoning Administrator, has worked diligently to achieve Stratford's acceptance into FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program Community Rating System based on its efforts in protecting Town residents from storm/flood-related events. Coastal and riverine flooding causes hundreds of millions of dollars'-worth of damage to homes and businesses around the country on an annual basis. Typical homeowners and commercial property insurance policies do not cover flood losses. The National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System (CRS) will credit the Town of Stratford's efforts for going beyond the minimum flood protection standards by reducing flood insurance premiums for the community's residential and commercial property owners. After a lengthy two-year application process led by the Office of Planning and Zoning, Stratford has secured a CRS Class 8, making it one of the highest scoring municipalities in the State of Connecticut. The classification will become effective for Stratford residents starting May 1, 2019. By securing a Class 8, Stratford residents should expect an average annual savings of \$141 per NFIP policy, totaling \$204,000 in community-wide savings. The discounts provide an incentive for communities to implement new flood protection activities that can help save lives and property when a flood occurs. Stratford is 1 of 9 municipalities in the State of Connecticut to be granted acceptance in CRS, and has been

recognized as a leader in resilience efforts state-wide. More importantly, in addition to the cost savings related to NFIP premiums, Stratford residents will be safer and better-prepared for future flood-related events. Our enrollment in CRS supports economic development, enhancing the community for investment.

Susmitha Attota, Town Planner, came on board to work with Jay in the fall of 2018. Susmitha brings with her incredible experience and knowledge and will work with the planning commission as well as the recently formed Architectural Review Board.

Health Department



- Stratford Health Department is one of three accredited health departments Statewide
- Implemented the newly adopted federal FDA Food Code
- Assisted in the launch of ViewPoint
- Partnering with local health departments to design and share the cost of food inspection software

Health & Community Services:

Under the direction of Andrea Boissevain, the Stratford Health Department, one of three accredited health departments in the State of Connecticut, continues to apply high standard of performance for the benefit of Stratford residents and businesses. Working with regional and state partners we have implemented the newly adopted federal FDA Food Code. The Health department assisted in the launch of ViewPoint and is partnering with local health departments to design and share the cost of food inspection software. Recently the town council reviewed

and approved the updated ordinances for Barbershops, Hairdressing and Cosmetology. Community Health is a priority for us as well as the 6 collaborating area health departments, 2 acute care hospitals, 3 community health centers and other organizations who are addressing chronic diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, mental health and substance abuse in our communities.

Andrea is the co-chair of Region 1s Health Care Coalition and ESF8 and is leading the collaborative regional activities including an Ebola exercise and drills with hospitals and long-term care facilities to practice inter-agency response to emergency situation.



Community Services

- Facilitates the Juvenile Review Board which has more cases to date than all of last fiscal year
- Overdose prevention and Nalaxone administration classes are offered in cooperation with the Health and Fire Departments.
- Programs include Freshman Forum, suicide prevention, vaping awareness, Mental Health First Aid and regional health fairs were offered

Community Services: is Stratford's youth prevention bureau and is the lead agency for the Stratford Partnership of youth and families and led by Tammy Trojanowski. In partnership with the Stratford Public Schools, Police Department and Juvenile Court, Community services facilitates the Juvenile Review Board which has more cases to date than all of last fiscal year.

Overdose prevention and Narcan administration classes are offered in cooperation with the Health and Fire Departments. In addition, the annual Freshman Forum, suicide prevention, vaping awareness, Mental Health First Aid

and regional health fairs were offered. In concert with the team approach, Community Services with Perry House Foundation, Sterling House Community Center and the Stratford Public Schools hosts the first annual Youth Leadership Stratford conference.

Community Services is highly engaged in the Stratford School Readiness Council and with community partners advocates for after school child care opportunities, engages middle and high school youth in community activities and is moving us toward being a trauma-informed community. We are working to license our counseling services so we can bill HUSKY and other insurance to ensure long-standing, quality sustainable programming.



Stratford Public Schools

- **Bunnell High** graduation rate is 100% - 54% go on to 4-year college
- **Stratford High** graduation rate is 98% with 52% going on to 4-year college
- Accountability Report demonstrates **no achievement gap**
- Top ten languages spoken by families in our schools include: **Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Arabic, Creole-Haitian, French, Urdu, Vietnamese, Mandarin and Albanian**

Stratford Public Schools: Bunnell High School graduation rate is 100% with 54% going to 4 year colleges and 16% to 2 year colleges

Stratford High School: graduation rate is 98% with 52% going to 4 year colleges and 21% going to 2 year colleges. In the last 3 years, the district has had 4 students accepted into Harvard, with other ivy leagues also represented.

Our accountability report from the state indicates that none of the Stratford schools have a significant achievement gap. That has been a great focus of our

work. Other than English, the top 10 languages spoken by our families include: Spanish, Portuguese, Polish, Arabic, Creole-Haitian, French, Urdu, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Albanian. There are a total of 49 different languages now in Stratford.

Stratford Police Department





- No increase in overall crime rate 2017-2018
- YTD reduction in crime of 8.5%
- Programs such as PAL designed to reach at-risk youth
- Police Engagement Program (PEP) - education about interaction with Police

Police: Police Chief Joe McNeil and his staff recognize that our diverse neighborhoods have different needs and we continue to work to address those needs. In fiscal year 2020 we will continue in our efforts to meet the challenges of 21st century policing. We remain focused on the concept of community policing, understanding that there is no “one size fits all” way of doing things.

Police overall crime rate had no increase at all in 2017 to 2018 with a YTD reduction from 2018 to 2019 of 8.5%.

Our community outreach programs through our Police Activities League (PAL) and other avenues continue to grow. The primary mission will be to expand programs and connect with at risk youth. The PAL design will be to maintain contact through all levels of school. We will work with the Board of Education to tailor PAL programs to students who will benefit the most from mentoring. PAL has impacted in excess of 1,000 students the previous year and is still growing.

The Stratford Police Department has developed a Police Engagement Program (PEP) to educate citizens on how to react to police contact. It is our belief that this information shows the perspective from citizen and officer. The program places residents in the position of an officer and runs scenarios in which they must choose a course of action. Real world incidents are then reviewed and discussed. This allows unfiltered dialogue and openness. We have run the program in both high schools and for several area churches. Currently, we are finishing a film version of the program to distribute.

Technology has become an important crime fighting tool. Our Computer Forensics division has become a recognized leader in the area. We will continue to invest in upgrading computers and video surveillance. We will coordinate with local business for access to camera surveillance to assist in investigations.

Stratford Dispatch



- New Technologies like TEXT 911, AED Link and Verinet
- Increased training for personnel

DISPATCH: Dispatch has successfully deployment of new technologies such as Text to 911, AED Link and New recording device (Verint)

Increased training opportunity for staff including ride alongs, customer service training, active shooter events, WebEOC and created new revenue opportunities through training and testing other departments dispatchers



Stratford EMS



- SEMS is accredited NAEMT Training Center
- Approved American Heart Association Training Center
- Approved Safe Sitter Site
- HEARTSafe Workplace
- EMS Association Lighthouse Award

- St. Vincent's recognized EMS Admin Giasullo and Volunteer Toomey with Values Award
- Bridgeport Hospital recognized EMT Wauthier with Provider of the Year Award

- Maintained response times, increased call coverage
- 2 medics on 24/7 with 2nd ambulance on overnights

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICE: Mike Loiz, executive director reports that SEMS is an accredited NAEMT Training Center, an approved American Heart Associated Training Center and an approved Safe Sitter Training Site

SEMS is a HEARTSafe workplace and maintained and enhanced HEARTSafe Community

EMS Association Lighthouse award

St Vincent's Recognized EMS Admin Giasullo and Volunteer Toomey with their Values Award

Bridgeport Hospital recognizes EMT Wauthier with Provider of the Year Award

Maintained Response times and increased call coverage

2 medics 247 and a second ambulance on overnights

Stratford Fire Department



- Four major fire events 2018-19
 - Shakespeare Theater, two commercial buildings on Research Drive, Success Hill Condominium
- ISO 2 designation insurance premium cost savings

Fire: We had four major fire events in 2018-19. Shakespeare Theatre and two commercial buildings on Research Drive resulted in full and partial losses. Public Safety and Emergency Management Director Larry Ciccarelli and Fire Chief Bob McGrath led outstanding public safety efforts in all incidents. I'm happy to report Kubtec is rebuilding in their original location on Research Drive and is looking for the opportunity to expand operations. The Success Hill Condo fire resulted in a total building loss and displacement of all residents of the 30-unit building. The Stratford team; Economic Development, Building, Fire Marshal, Police, Public Works, Mayors Office, Health, Senior Services and Community Services pulled together to assist after this devastating fire. Sterling House served as the receiver and fiduciary for donations assisting the Success Hill residents that were displaced. This was a fine example of the team approach that works in Stratford.

Our fire department is the only department rated ISO 2 in Fairfield County. That designation saves The ISO Public Protection Program, which is used by most underwriters in setting property insurance rates, now rates the Stratford Fire Department a Class 2 unit, which will, with some insurance carriers, lower residential and commercial premiums.

Finance and Operations



- **Grand List Growth** added \$63,807,118 or 1.4% over the last year
- **Closed Out** old bonds
- Using short-term debt options like **Bond Anticipation Notes (BANS)**
- Town-wide Revaluation process is underway
- New hires in critical roles

Finance and Operations: Under the management of Chris Tymniak, CAO and Jay Wahlberg, Finance Director, we have incorporated much efficiency that makes Stratford run leaner than prior years. Through their efforts Brown and Brown is both the Town and BOE's health insurance broker which affords us increased buying power and lower costs. Merit Insurance became our property and liability broker and has secured equal insurance coverage at reduced premiums.

Last fall we closed out old bonds returning millions of dollars to the town and we started taking advantage of short term debit options like Bond Anticipation Notes (BANS) and 5 year bond notes lowering our long term debit. We are bonding less money than we had in years past.

Our grand list continues to grow adding an additional \$63,807,118 or 1.4% over last year. The Town's revaluation will be conducted this year by Municipal Valuation Services, LLC, a private revaluation firm retained by the Town to assist the Assessor's office, under the direction of Melinda Fonda, with the town-wide revaluation project.

I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce you to some new hires to the Town of Stratford. Dawn Savo, assistant finance director, Selina Moschello, tax collector, Phil Ryan, purchasing agent and Donna Otlowski, assistant assessor work in the Finance Department. Sandy Aburr, has been hired as director of senior services and Karen Sportini is our new Economic and Community Development Supervisor.

Ron Ing's talents were tapped to expand his Human Resource Director position to include Director of Risk Insurance. Ron is actively working with all departments but especially Public Works and the Board of Education to identify and improve our exposure to injury and damages. To assist Ron, Susan Barksdale has been promoted to assistant HR director. We have successfully negotiated four labor agreements with the cooperation of our bargaining units and our town attorney team of Chris Hodgson and Bob Mitchell.

Finance and Operations

- Department of Public Works managing 1.8 million sq. feet of buildings and 200 miles of roads and sidewalks.
- Recreation Department improvements - Rec Desk and opening of Ella Grasso Pool
- 2nd Shift parks crew
- "BigBelly" solar powered compacting trash receptacles
- Improvements at Short Beach, Long Beach, Stonybrook Park, Long Brook Pond, and Penders Field
- Active vegetation management and schedule of pruning and removing dangerous trees



Public Works: Our public works department under the direction of Maurice McCarthy, continues to manage and maintain more than 1,800,000 square feet of building and 200 miles of roads and sidewalks. Our legislative delegation assisted in the conveyance of the Ella Grasso property and the town opened the handicap

accessible pool this past summer under the direction of our new recreation superintendent, Amy Knorr. The Rec department also has improved operations with the deployment of Rec Desk which affords the user the opportunity to reserve fields and town facilities online.

Public works implemented a 2nd shift parks crew that has afforded the town additional field maintenance coverage while reducing costs. We are now operating Big Belly solar powered trash compactors which provide greater economic benefit and manpower efficiency to trash removal at our parks and retail centers.

The Town's Capital Improvement Plan is administered and managed by Deputy Public Works Director, Raynae Serra. These projects are critical to Stratford's infrastructure and improvement and require great skill and talent in implementing.

Public Works has also managed and implemented the improvements at Short and Long Beach, Stonybrook Park, Long Brook Pond, Motil Pond, and Penders field. They have managed our vegetation growth and have actively been pruning and removing dangerous trees.

I am honored and proud to represent Stratford as mayor. Our community builds team and accentuates partnerships and achieves great results from those collaborations. When I think of the Town of Stratford I think of unbelievable environmental assets in our river, shore and forest. I see transportation infrastructure of adjacent highways, rail and air. I see non-profit partners second to none in our Library, YMCA, Sterling House, Stratford Visiting Nurses, and Stratford Chamber and most importantly I see the resiliency if a community that knows itself, works together and can achieve greatness. I am looking forward to what the future holds for our special community of Stratford. Thank you for

attending and have a great afternoon.



THANK YOU

Mayor Laura R. Hoydick

mayor@townofstratford.com

203.385.4001

Stratford Town Hall

2725 Main Street

Stratford, CT. 06615