



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

P.O. BOX 495

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Mary A. Glassman - First Selectman

February 25, 2013

To the Board of Selectmen and Taxpayers of Simsbury:

I am pleased to present the 2013-2014 budget for your review. I am proud to report that for the fifth year in a row, the Town of Simsbury budget is below the fiscal year budget for 2008-2009.

The 2013-2014 budget request totals **\$18,128,810** which is a nominal \$90,210 increase – or **0.5 %** - over last year. In recognition of continuing difficult economic conditions, it is my belief that the people of Simsbury cannot afford to pay more at this time.

We are proud of the Town's track record of conservative budgeting practices which has helped Simsbury maintain its Aaa bond rating from Moody's Investors Service – first awarded in 2010. The Aaa rating was reaffirmed on February 20, 2013 by Moody's which noted the Town's "sound fiscal management, stable tax base, strong wealth indices and . . . manageable debt burden." The Town of Simsbury not only has a track record of conservative budgets but last year returned \$340,000 to the General Fund resulting from cost savings and internal controls.

The goal of this proposed budget is to provide the taxpayers of Simsbury with the highest quality services at the lowest possible cost. Thanks to our staff, volunteers and the community, the Town of Simsbury is recognized as #1 in Hartford Magazine's list of Top Towns and was ranked #39 in the country on a list of "Best Places to Live" by Money Magazine in 2011.

Primary drivers of the 2013-2014 budget are contractual increases, including salary, benefits and pension costs. A special thank you to Simsbury's CSEA-represented Town employees who helped balance increased costs by agreeing to increased pension fund contributions, increased healthcare co-payments, a first-ever contribution to the town's OPEB and introduction of the Town's first defined contribution plan option for new hires. These actions will help to stabilize future obligations for Simsbury taxpayers.

Another driver of the proposed budget includes additional funding for the Farmington Valley Health District for additional food service inspections. The budget also includes additional building inspection funding in response to increased economic activity in town – more than \$17 million in projects have been approved for construction and are underway, such as the Dorset Crossing Urgent Care Center and a 12 lot residential subdivision on Sand Hill Road. There are other projects in the pipeline as well, including addition of an approved 53,000 square foot supermarket.

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The Town has taken advantage of technological advances. For example, technology in the Tax Collector's office which allows residents to pay their tax bills on line has reduced printing and staff costs in the tax department because of the increase in online payments – nearly 4,000 residents chose to pay on-line which is the highest number ever.

As we head into fiscal year 2013-2014, town staff and officials remain concerned about uncertain state funding – including a proposed \$213,000 decrease in general fund revenue from the State and the potential loss of nearly \$6.3 million in revenue from the proposed elimination of most car taxes. Grand list growth continues to remain stagnant which limits additional revenue to the Town.

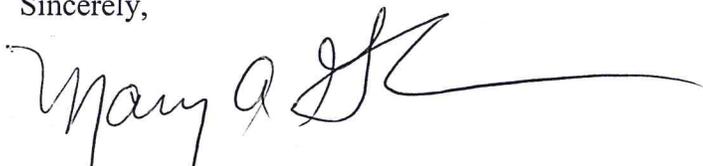
Simsbury's ability to control spending despite these pressures has been the result of employee cooperation, shared services with the Board of Education and regional towns, increasing support from volunteers, and the ability of Town staff to attract and secure an unprecedented amount of grant funding: \$8,360,050.

Finally, I would like to commend everyone who worked to prepare this budget including department heads and town staff. This truly was a team effort.

The Town of Simsbury budget can be found online at www.simsbury-ct.gov. Budget workshop dates are also available online.

I look forward to discussing this budget request with the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance and taxpayers of Simsbury.

Sincerely,



Mary A. Glassman

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David Gardner, Assessor
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