
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Wendy Mackstutis – First Selectman
DATE: December 20, 2021

Just as we thought we were getting back on track to normal, it appears we're getting reeled back in. Please do what it takes to enjoy your family over the holidays. Thank you to everyone who has been vaccinated and gotten boosters.

I'm taking the liberty to speak for the whole board and express our condolences to the family and friends of those impacted by the event of last Sunday night. It saddened all of us and exemplifies how we stand together as a community.

Our new BOS spent Saturday 12/11 in a very thoughtful goal setting session. There was lots of spirited, passionate, and honest dialogue between all board members. It's evident that we are all here to do what we think is best for our community and that no one on this board is shy.

Looking back at 2021

- Precautions taken by the town for Covid to keep people safe
- Committed funding for the Latimer Lane project
- Meadowood purchase and the role the community played
- The dedication of the Flower Bridge
- The 10K people who came to our town for Darius Rucker
- All those who came out to vote in the 2021 Municipal election

Looking ahead to 2022

- Tough budget decisions
- American Rescue Plan funds
- Zoning items regarding pot and ADUs
- Complete and start to implement our goals
- Ways to keep everyone safe and healthy

I'll resume office hours in January, but I'm available via cell and email.

Wishing everyone who celebrates a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year to all!

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: December 20, 2021

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

We are monitoring the state's municipal COVID alert system and are currently at "red" status for the period ending December 11th. Red status indicates that we have more than 15 COVID cases per 100,000 residents; we are currently at 39.7 cases per 100,000 people, an increase from 33.2 for the week prior. Over the most recent two-week period we had a total of 141 cases. Our positivity rate for the week ending December 11th was 7.1%, down from 7.2% the week prior.

FVHD is reporting that "we are experiencing some of the highest case rates seen throughout the entire pandemic. Increases are being seen in all age groups. Lack of mask wearing among both vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in public places, social gatherings and dismissing symptoms and not getting tested are fueling the ongoing spread. Hospitalizations have also increased significantly." FVHD has said that CT has 40 confirmed cases of the Omicron variant, and that variant could become the dominant variant in the State of Connecticut in about a month.

As of December 16th, there were 710 hospitalized cases state-wide, of which 533 or 75.1% are not fully vaccinated. FVHD encourages individuals to get their COVID-19 vaccine as well as COVID-19 booster. Individuals seeking boosters may go to <https://portal.ct.gov/vaccine-portal/COVID-19-Vaccination-Scheduling-Options>

Data from the state ending December 15th reports that 21,380 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, or 84.19% of the population, while 76.94% of our residents or 19,539 people are now fully vaccinated. Further vaccination data for Simsbury by age group:

- Ages 5-11, 52.46% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 40.75% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 12-17, 82.27% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 77.34% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 18-24, 100% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 96.6% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 25-44, 100% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 94.03% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 45-64, 87.94% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 82.19% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 65+, 100% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 100% are fully vaccinated

The ten towns comprising the Farmington Valley Health District constitute "high" risk for levels of community transmission based on CDC definitions (305 per 100,000), while the state of Connecticut and Hartford County are also at "high" risk. In areas with substantial transmission or higher, the CDC recommends that everyone (including fully vaccinated individuals) wear a mask in public indoor settings to help prevent spread of the virus and to protect others. FVHD shared a very good CDC article on the effectiveness of the use of cloth masks to slow the spread of the virus:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/science-briefs/masking-science-sars-cov2.html>

Continued mask wearing in our municipal buildings helps to protect our staff to ensure that essential services (such as snow plowing) and infrastructure (such as our sewer treatment facility) remain open and operational for the public, amongst other factors. Therefore, we are continuing to require masks indoors at our municipal buildings at this time.

The following state-wide order still remains in place for indoor settings:

- Unvaccinated individuals must wear masks;
- Vaccinated individuals not required to wear masks except for below:
 - Masks are required to be worn by everyone in certain settings such as healthcare facilities, facilities housing vulnerable populations, public and private transit, correctional facilities, schools, and childcare
 - Private businesses and local governments have the ability to require mask wearing indoors at their facilities

FVHD is urging everyone to remind their employees, community members and others to do the following regardless of vaccination status:

- Stay HOME and isolate if you are exhibiting ANY cold like symptoms OR have been with others who are exhibiting symptoms
- Seek a test and isolate until test results are available
- Report positive results to employers and schools as appropriate
- If you are positive, seek guidance regarding isolation and quarantine from FVHD

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS

Board of Selectmen Goal-Setting Session: We made very good progress at our goal setting session for the Board of Selectmen's 2021-2023 term on December 11th. As a reminder, we will need an additional session in January to complete this work; when you have a moment, please complete the Doodle poll with your availability.

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Culture, Parks and Recreation: Ethan Deeds has been promoted to Facility Maintenance Technician in the Parks Division. Ethan has been a dedicated Parks employee since 2006, most recently serving as a Parks Maintainer II. He has been the lead staff member caring for Memorial Park, in addition to other duties. I am excited for the knowledge and enthusiasm Ethan will bring to this newly created role. Congratulations Ethan!

Planning: Director of Planning Mike Glidden will be leaving the Town of Simsbury at the end of December. Mike has been with the Town of Simsbury since November 2013, initially hired as our Code Enforcement Officer, then promoted to Assistant Town Planner and most recently served as our Director of Planning and Community Development, a role he has held since September 2018. I will certainly miss having Mike on staff. He has established good working relationships with our business community, has always provided excellent customer service to our residents, and has found creative solutions to difficult problems. I wish Mike well in his next endeavor. Thank you for service to Simsbury!

Social Services: The Department of Community and Social Services is sponsoring a holiday family fun take home kit. They are distributing gingerbread house kits to interested families. All are welcome to receive one, while supplies last. Please contact us at 860-658-3283 or stop by Eno Memorial Hall during business hours.