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## FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Wendy Mackstutis – First Selectman  
**DATE:** February 14, 2024

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### Happy Valentine's Day!

Hope you all received or gave a card, candy, flowers or a hug from the dog or cat to celebrate how you feel about the people (and animals) that you love!

### Black History Month

I want to acknowledge that February is Black History Month. This is a good time to expand your knowledge and understanding of our collective history, by sharing a link to this website, created by the US Library of Congress, that includes many links to audio and video presentations, along with exhibits ongoing this month. <https://blackhistorymonth.gov/>

*Sidebar: As a member of a book club of Simsbury Moms (some now grandmas), who happens to be celebrating our 30 years together this February (shout out to Jan P, Jan W, Jennifer, Barb, Amy, and Ruby), we have read many novels by black authors. Our most recent novel, was loved by all of our members, so I'm sharing it here for those who need a book club recommendation - The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store by James McBride*

### Superbowl winners

Congrats to the KC Chiefs on their win this Sunday! I actually fell asleep during the final quarter and woke up during OT. I did not know about the rule change that both teams get a possession until I noticed no one was gearing up to celebrate on the 49'ers last drive.

As I did in the prior years, I'm sharing my favorite Superbowl ad. Honestly, I felt the pickings were slim, but loved seeing Michael Cera (Superbad, Arrested Development, Juno - some of my favorites, and even Barbie) in the CeraVe commercials. Of course, second place has to be Dunkin', just because I love Dunkin'.

### Board of Selectmen Goal Setting

This is an evolving process, so stay tuned as we review our the priorities set forth during our initial goal setting discussion January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and continue the conversation to formulate what our full board would like to focus on during our term in office...and beyond, for the Town of Simsbury, our residents and business community.

### FY 2024/2025 Budget Process

Our Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Cycle is underway. Town Manager Marc Nelson is currently working with each department to discuss their '24/'25 budget needs. During the month of February, the Town Manager's budget will be developed, and presented to the Board of Selectmen, per below timeline. That will kick off the meetings throughout March for workshops, presentations, and adoption of the budget.

~~Tri Board Meeting (BOF, BOS, BOE) — 12/19/2023 at 5:45 Simsbury Public Library~~

~~Police Commission Budget presentation — 1/22/2024 at 5:00pm Town Hall Main Meeting Room~~

Town Manager Budget presentation to BOS – 2/26/2024 6:00pm Town Hall Main Meeting Room  
BOS Budget Workshop – Town Hall Main Meeting Room - 3/9/2024 9:00am  
BOS Meeting – (potential budget adoption) 3/11/2024 6:00pm Town Hall Main Meeting Room  
BOS Budget presentation to BOF – 3/19/2024 5:45 (location TBD)  
BOF Public Hearing on the Budget – WEDNESDAY 4/3/2024 6:00pm Simsbury Public Library  
Budget Referendum – May 2024

### Early Voting is Coming to Town

Our Simsbury Registrars of Voters, Karen Cortes and Susan Salina have been hard at work preparing for the NEW in-person early voting in the State of CT. All voters registered with a party are able to vote in the upcoming Democratic and Republican Presidential Preference Primaries. Hours are 10 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. March 26-28 and March 30. Absentee ballots will also be available, following regular protocol. Day of voting will be held at all 4 polling locations on April 2. (Latimer Lane voting will be at Henry James in the front gym.)

### SVAA emails and comments

We have recently received multiple emails regarding the Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association and the funding of the second ambulance. I am including the data and links to the information that was discussed and presented at the meeting between the SVAA, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance. [https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf9751/f/agendas/12-19-23\\_special\\_bos\\_bof\\_packet.pdf](https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf9751/f/agendas/12-19-23_special_bos_bof_packet.pdf) This meeting from 12/19 can be viewed on SCM. The SVAA has also provided an email in response, addressed to the Board of Selectmen, and sent to those who have emailed the board. We will include it in the Communications Section of our next meeting. If you'd like it before then, please email me and I will provide it. (I'm having trouble attaching it here)

### Housing Policy Advisor Committee

In our agenda tonight, we have a resolution establishing the Simsbury Housing Policy Advisory Committee, which will be voted on by our board. This is a long time coming, as many municipalities have established Affordable Housing Committees over the last few years to address the issues across the state. Our approach is to focus on all housing needs in our community, whether it's workforce housing, or the down-sizing needs of our seniors (of which I am now one!), to name a few. With work that's been done by the Town Manager's Office, the contributions from our community to the POCD, or the work of the DEI Housing Subcommittee, the HPAC will have plenty of ideas to work through. We have heard from the community, and this is the next step forward.

### Public Hearing - Tax Abatement for Volunteer Firefighters, and Volunteer Ambulance

In tonight's agenda, if the vote passes, we will be scheduling a public hearing on the above item for our next meeting on 2/26/2024 at 6:00 PM. It is item g in the link below.

[https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf9751/f/agendas/2-14-24\\_regular\\_meeting\\_packet\\_0.pdf](https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf9751/f/agendas/2-14-24_regular_meeting_packet_0.pdf)

### Rededication of the George Washington Monument

The Abigail Phelps Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution have submitted a public gathering permit for this event. If approved by our board, the event will be held on April 24, 2024, on Iron Horse Boulevard, near the intersection of Jim Gallagher Way. The ceremony will start at 1:00 PM. More to come from this group, but I wanted to get it on people's calendars, as it is in tonight's agenda.

### Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council

Staff responsibility and administration for our DEI Council will now be handled by the Town Manager's office in an effort to provide the most streamlined approach and resource availability. We thank our Social Services team, led by Director Kristen Formanek, for their support of this council, this since its inception in 2020.

### Keep Simsbury Warm Program and Food Pantry information

Sharing this again since it is still winter, and to acknowledge the generous donation from the McLean-Shinamans to the Food Pantry in tonight's agenda. Residents in need of heating assistance can get more information, find out how to qualify and take advantage of this program, by reaching out to our Social Services department. This link has information on this program, and others, on page 10

[https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhli9751/f/news/jan-feb\\_2024\\_newsletter\\_final.pdf](https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhli9751/f/news/jan-feb_2024_newsletter_final.pdf)

### Office Hours

Check my webpage for updates, which are being updated.

Cell - 860-543-3770 Email - [wmackstutis@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:wmackstutis@simsbury-ct.gov) to set something up that works for you.

Wendy

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## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Marc Nelson – Town Manager  
**DATE:** February 14, 2024

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### **DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES**

***Culture, Parks and Recreation:*** There will be special holiday public skating sessions held at the Simsbury Farms Rink on Monday, February 19 and Tuesday, February 20 from 1:00-3:00pm each day. Admission is \$5 for residents and \$7 for non-residents. Skate rentals are \$5 if needed.

The Simsbury Recreation Dept. has organized a bus trip to the world famous Bronx Zoo for the April school vacation. Trip will be held on Monday, April 8 and is \$75 per person. Limited seating remains, sign up at [www.SimsburyRec.com](http://www.SimsburyRec.com).

The Simsbury Recreation Dept. has openings in Spring '24 Learn To Play Pickleball Programs. Come find out why this sport is so popular and be active this spring! We will have you playing a game by the end of your first lesson! Sign up at [www.SimsburyRec.com](http://www.SimsburyRec.com)

***Social Services:*** The Simsbury Loan Locker recently passed a milestone of 3,000 visits! The Loan Locker, which was initiated by local residents, makes available items such as wheelchairs, walkers, canes, knee scooters, and bed rails free of charge to people in need. The program is coordinated by community volunteers in consultation with the Aging and Disability Commission. Medical equipment is collected through donations, and inspected by a licensed physical therapist. The Simsbury medical equipment Loan Locker is at the Apple Barn at Simsbury Farms, 60 Old Farms Road. All pick-ups and drop-offs will be arranged by appointment only. To make a donation or borrow equipment, email [SimsburyLoanLocker@gmail.com](mailto:SimsburyLoanLocker@gmail.com) or call (860) 658-3224.

***Town Manager's Office:*** I'm excited to report that Franklyn Barrueco has been promoted to Management Specialist in the Office of the Town Manager, and Tom Fitzgerald has been promoted to Deputy Town Manager. Both Franklyn and Tom have served in the Manager's office with distinction and are stepping into their new roles with great enthusiasm and energy, so please join me in congratulating them this evening.

Thank you....