
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Wendy Mackstutis – First Selectman
DATE: February 28, 2022

I want to take a moment to acknowledge the enormity of what is happening in Ukraine right now. How watching a democratic county be invaded and attacked for no reason other than power is shocking to all of us. What is even harder to fathom, is seeing people, who until recently, were going about their everyday lives - to suddenly having to leave their homes, take up arms and fight for their freedom. One of the scariest moments to me was seeing the 28-year-old member of parliament as he left the capital last week, having been issued 2 AR 15s – so that he could protect his government and country. There have been many other moments that hit close to home – watching people flee or seek shelter with their children, elderly parents, and pets, but the starkness of seeing the responsibility of their government going from leading and legislating to fighting, should point out how precious and fragile democracy can be. Knowing our community, I'm comfortable saying "Simsbury Stands with Ukraine".

Now on to our day to day lives.

Included in tonight's agenda is a memorandum addressed to our board, that I've shared with Maria regarding our upcoming budget. These were items that I made note of and shared last year after going thru the 2021/2022 budget. I felt there were some things that could be done to help clarify the data and make it easier to navigate. Since I am seeing the budget tonight for the first time, some of these items may already be included – Maria has said there is already more detail included on the capital projects. My hope is that these recommendations will be provided to the board as we work thru the budget book over the next 2 weeks, in preparation for the upcoming workshops.

The following will be broadcast on SCTV and can be watched at your convenience. Please check the Board of Selectman page for times.

Budget Preparation Schedule

Town Manager Budget Presentation to Board of Selectmen	February 28, 2022
Board of Selectmen Budget Workshop	March 10 & March 12, 2022
Board of Selectmen Budget Adoption	March 14 or March 16, 2022
Board of Education Budget Presentation to Board of Finance	March 8, 2022
Board of Selectmen Budget Presentation to Board of Finance	March 22, 2022
Board of Finance Public Hearing on the Budget	April 5, 2022
Budget Referendum	May 3, 2022 (<i>tentative</i>)

The mask mandate has been lifted in town buildings and our schools as of today. Given the drop in cases and vaccine availability, the plan is to try and start living COVID as it's not going away. People are still getting it, but those who are vaccinated seem to be staying out of the hospital and recovering quickly. Let's hope things only improve and we can move on to our new normal.

Regarding public audience – now that we are in a hybrid mode for meetings, we are hoping to expand how to get your words shared – for those who are still uncomfortable coming to this meeting room in person. Keep your eyes open for that.

We are waiting for the Zoning Commission to pass along to the BOS the ADU Opt Out baton. If Simsbury is going to Opt out of the state ADU act, we need to work with the public to find out how we want to expand our current regulations to represent the best interest of Simsbury.

The deadline to opt out is January 2023.

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/act/pa/pdf/2021PA-00029-R00HB-06107-PA.pdf>

Residents wanting to know how to qualify for tax relief can visit this link, as there is information on how to apply and what conditions qualify, along with upcoming deadlines.

<https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/assessors-office/pages/property-tax-relief>

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: February 28, 2022

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

We are monitoring the state's municipal COVID alert system and are currently at "red" status for the period ending February 19th. Red status indicates that we have more than 15 COVID cases per 100,000 residents; we are currently at 15.8 cases per 100,000 people, a decrease from 19.1 for the week prior. Over the most recent two-week period we had a total of 56 cases. We also had a positivity rate of 6%, a decrease from the prior period's rate of 8.6%.

FVHD is reporting "community cases in the FVHD continue to decrease from 140 cases for the week ending February 12, 2022, to 98 cases for the week ending February 19, 2022. This data does not include positive test results from at-home test kits. There were approximately 400 fewer tests taken among residents in the Farmington Valley in the last two-week period when compared to the previous two-week period."

FVHD has also shared "There are currently 248 individuals hospitalized with COVID-19 in Connecticut. Of those 248, 127 (51.2%) are not fully vaccinated. In Hartford County, there were 95 new COVID-19 admissions in the last week. In the last 7 days, hospital admissions in Hartford County have decreased by 20.8%. It is not documented if hospitalized individuals are infected with the Delta or Omicron variant. As of February 23, 2022, Omicron accounts for 98.6% of sequenced specimens."

The CDC recently issued updated guidelines for masking based on COVID-19 Community Levels. Using the [provided link](#) you can check on each county in the country to see if it is considered low, medium or high. Currently Hartford County is classified as "Low". The new guidelines consider a multitude of data points to determine a county's status including local hospitalizations from COVID-19, potential for strain on local health care system, COVID-19 cases in the community, and vaccination percentages. Please [click here](#) to learn more about the new COVID-19 Community Levels Overview.

As of today, February 28th, Town Facilities have transitioned to mask wearing being optional. Please note that masks will continue to be required on Town of Simsbury Dial-A-Ride buses.

Data from the state ending February 23rd reports that 22,402 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, or 88.21% of the population, while 81.42% of our residents or 20,677 people are now fully vaccinated. Additionally, 13,039 Simsbury residents, or 51.34% of the population, have received an additional booster dose. Further vaccination data for Simsbury by age group:

- Ages 5-11, 64.67% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 59.76% are fully vaccinated.
- Ages 12-17, 87.06% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 82.05% are fully vaccinated; 37% of the total population of Ages 12 – 17 have received an additional booster dose.
- Ages 18-24, 100% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 100% are fully vaccinated; 57.84% of the total population of ages 18 - 24 received an additional booster dose;

- Ages 25-44, 100% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 98.7% are fully vaccinated; 59.66% of the total population of ages 25 - 44 received an additional booster dose.
- Ages 45-64, 89% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 84.03% are fully vaccinated; 61.99% of the total population of ages 45 - 64 received an additional booster dose.
- Ages 65+, 100% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 100% are fully vaccinated; 89.73% of the total population of ages 65+ received an additional booster dose.

FVHD has scheduled some vaccination/booster clinics. These will be open to all students who live in the FHVD and/or are enrolled at a school in the FVHD as well as school staff and contractors. The first clinic is scheduled for March 2 with the second dose on March 23.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS

- ***Additions to the Agenda:***
 - Trust Act Reporting Requirements:*** A recent change was made to the reporting requirements associated with Public Act 19-20. The upcoming report is due on March 1, 2022, and requires legislative authorization. This item can be added to tonight's meeting agenda under Selectmen Action with a 2/3 vote.
 - ARPA Work Group/Finance Sub-Committee:*** It has been recommended that the ARPA Workgroup be disbanded, but that the duties be reassigned to the Finance Sub-Committee of the Board of Selectmen. This item can be added to tonight's meeting agenda under Selectmen Action with a 2/3 vote.
- ***Budget Workshop Dates:*** As a reminder, there are two budget workshops scheduled - Thursday, March 10th beginning at 5:30pm, and an all-day session on Saturday, March 12th beginning at 9:00am. We will provide breakfast and lunch for attendees.

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Public Works: Recently the Department of Public Works posted their annual MS4 report to the Town website. It can be accessed [here](#).