
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Wendy Mackstutis – First Selectman
DATE: March 11, 2024

FY 2024/2025 Budget Process

We are deep into the budget process and have been focused on getting through the process. We spent all day on Saturday, March 9th working through the budget, and continued at our Monday March 11th meeting, which went until 10:00 PM. We finalized our BOS budget, and it will now go to our Board of Finance. It's been a lot of work and time for the Selectmen, our Finance team, the Town Manager's Office, and the Board of Finance. See the dates below for how you can participate in the process and be heard.

~~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 – 3/11/2024 6:00pm Town Hall Main Meeting Room BUDGET ADOPTED~~

BOS Budget presentation to BOF – 3/19/2024 5:45 (Town Hall-Main Meeting Room)

BOF Public Hearing – WEDNESDAY 4/3/2024 6:00pm Simsbury Public Library

Budget Referendum – May 2024

Women's History Month

Thank you to Tenesha Grant, Open Choice Liaison at both SHS and HJMS for inviting me to meet with the HJMS Girls Empowerment group and speak to them during Women's History Month. I was honored to speak to this group of young women in 8th grade about how become our town's Chief Elected Official, and about my professional experience prior to that. I did a lot of thinking about my road to 'success' and it became apparent that all women have multiple choices that they can make, with potential twists and turns along the way. I also realized that age is irrelevant in regard to when you become successful, as I am celebrating my 68th birthday tomorrow and this is far from where I even expected to be in my career.

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.)

From the Bike Ped Advisory
Safe cycling programs offered – see below.

Farmington Valley Smart Cycling

For knowledge and confidence to ride safely and legally on roads and multi-use trails

Friday, April 5, 2024 5:00-9:30 pm

Saturday, April 6, 2024 10:00am-2:30pm

Location: Mitchell Volkswagen,
416 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury CT

Through classroom instruction, on-bike drills, and a group ride, this class will cover the bicycle safety check, starting, stopping, shifting, scanning, proper lane/intersection positioning, crash avoidance techniques, and fixing a flat. Completion of Smart Cycling is a prerequisite for other cycling courses, including the certification course for League Cycling Instructors. Participants must bring their own bikes and helmets. Ages 15 and up.



Open Space Committee

As honorary chair of this committee (by charter), I am surrounded by committee members who steeped in knowledge about our environment, trees, invasives, pollinators and more, that I do not hold, but continue to learn about. At our last meeting, Margery Winter shared this post about an upcoming series, and I promised to share it in my First Selectman's report.

HOME HABITAT
2024 SESSION ONE
Series

March 12, 2024
7:00 p.m.

**Seeing Life:
Bring Back the Pollinators**

Palmer Hall, First Church of Christ
689 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury
(Parking behind the church)

FREE and Open to the Public!

Creating a healthy pollinator-friendly ecosystem in your own yard help dwindling pollinator population and will welcome beneficial native insects, birds, and small animals! Join us on 3/12 to learn more!

Presented by SPP with the support of:
Simsbury Conservation Commission
Gardeners of Simsbury
The Simsbury Grange
Simsbury Land Trust
Simsbury Open Space Committee

Next in the series:
3/26 Seeing Red: How to Identify and Remove Home Habitat Invasives
4/9: Seeing Stars: Creating a Healthy Nighttime Home Habitat

Simsbury Farms Golf Course
It's OPEN!!

HB5446 Simsbury Community Media

Thank you to Mark Orenstein for his support of our local Community Access Stations in CT. He came to our BOS meeting and the board consented to agree to provide testimony on this bill, which will help fund 'SCTV'. I provided the testimony attached, with the help of Mark and Selectman Beal, who are both on the SCM Board of Directors.



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET - SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

Wendy Mackstutis - First Selectman

March 13, 2024

Energy and Technology Committee
Connecticut General Assembly

Subject: In **Support of HB5446**, AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY ACCESS TELEVISION, THE CONNECTICUT TELEVISION NETWORK AND LOW-INCOME INTERNET ACCESS

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

This letter is being sent on behalf of the full Board of Selectmen in support of HB5446 and urge your consideration and favorable review of this legislation. We want to ensure there is a sustainable funding model for Community Access Stations in Connecticut.

Simsbury Community Media (SCM), founded as Simsbury Community Television (SCTV) in 1984, is an innovative information resource that has served the Town of Simsbury for 40 years. A local nonprofit organization, it is dedicated to fostering community engagement and providing a platform for diverse voices. As members of the Simsbury Board of Selectmen, along with our Board of Education, we provide direct funding to support this local Community Access Station, SCM. On behalf of the residents and taxpayers of Simsbury, please do what is your power to support Community Access Stations like SCM by voting **yes on HB5446**.

SCM broadcasts all types of local programming for our community, using live and recorded linear cable television channels, and on demand via YouTube. Led by a volunteer Board of Directors, a full-time Station Manager, and Production Assistant, total channel viewership in 2023 amounted to 300,000 views and 54,000 hours watched.

The SCM studio and offices reside in the town landmark, Eno Memorial Hall, and sits in our downtown on Hopmeadow Street. Several years ago, SCM placed easily operable robotic cameras in the two main meeting rooms in Simsbury Town Hall and in the two large program rooms in the Simsbury Public Library to provide consistent access to public and government meetings. This allows the public easy viewing of both government meetings and special general-interest programming, which are live-streamed to Public Access channels on linear cable TV and via the internet to the SCM YouTube channel. These meetings are recorded for cable channel playback and on-demand viewing.

(860) 543-3770

wmackstutis@simsbury-ct.gov
www.simsbury-ct.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer
8:30 - 7:00 Monday
8:30 - 4:30 Tuesday through Thursday
8:30 - 1:00 Friday

At the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020, the town collaborated with SCM to meet the Governor's emergency order to provide live audio of all virtual town meetings. Within two weeks, SCM was live streaming both the video and audio, meeting this critical need, and within six weeks had automated the process so the meeting coordinator could establish the live streaming/recording. SCM continues to provide this service today by broadcasting and streaming in-person and hybrid public meetings with professional-level high-definition video and superior audio quality.

Simsbury Community Media is an invaluable resource to our community. They bring our meetings to the public and keep our residents connected to town events. I'm writing to share our concern that this continued level of service is under threat unless the funding for Community Access Stations is adapted to modern times. Making this change is in your power. Please vote **YES on HB5446**.

Very Respectfully,

Wendy Mackstutis, First Selectman
Town of Simsbury

CC: State Senator Lisa Seminara
State Representative Melissa Osborne
Simsbury Community Television Board of Directors
Simsbury Board of Selectmen

Office Hours

Check my webpage for updates, which are being updated.

Cell - 860-543-3770 Email - wmackstutis@simsbury-ct.gov to set something up that works for you.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Marc Nelson – Town Manager
DATE: March 11, 2024

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Police Department: The annual citizens police academy started on Thursday February 22, 2024. This is the 21st annual citizens police academy. Over the ten-week academy, adult residents, business owners and town employees will learn about the services provided by the Police Department, the region and the court system, meet and interact with the men, women and K9 of the police department, and observe officers on patrol and dispatchers in our communications center.

Town Manager's Office: The Human Library is coming this month, Saturday, March 23rd @ 10 AM, to the Simsbury Public Library, organized by the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Council!

In the best sense of the word, the Human Library is a library of people and their experiences with prejudice. However, instead of paperback books, actual people are on loan for conversations. The concept is about acknowledging and challenging the prejudice that we all carry towards one another. For that reason, the Human Library creates a safe space for conversation where topics subject to taboo, marginalization, or stigmatization can be openly addressed without condemnation. The people acting as Books have directly or indirectly been exposed to prejudice, bias, or discrimination based on aspects of their person, heritage, or life experiences. At the Human Library, we invite in all questions and our Books engage in sharing their personal experiences with Readers.

Social Services: Cheese Day is tomorrow, 9 AM, at the Shepard of the Hills Lutheran Church! Cheese Day, our food distribution event, is typically held on the second Tuesday of each month. Participants are scheduled for shopping appointments at 15-minute intervals.

Pantry bags are provided for clients to bring each time. At appointments, clients are able to select items, and receive fresh produce and household goods.

Residents who meet income guidelines, are eligible to be a Pantry participant, and meet the legal definition of being homebound, may receive a monthly delivery of their Pantry items. This is a volunteer-based service and relies on the availability of volunteers.

Thank you....