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## FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Wendy Mackstutis – First Selectman  
**DATE:** April 25, 2022

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It's hard to believe that it's the end of April! I'm hoping that May brings some better weather so we can spend more time outside with consistent temps, sun, and no wind! And on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, everyone will have the opportunity to make their voices heard by voting in the Budget Referendum. Voting will be at Henry James from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. Absentee voting is an option for those who aren't able to vote in person. Absentee ballot applications can be picked up at the Town Clerk's office. Make sure you have your driver's license or other accepted ID with you.

The budget includes additions to town staff - an IT Specialist, 2 Police Officers and a CALEA Specialist. With the 3.72% grand list growth this year, we were able to add these improvements without a mill rate increase – taxes remain flat. And with the help of the America Rescue Plan Act, planned and desired capital projects like improvements to our parks and infrastructure, were also funded without impacting our taxes.

<https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/finance/pages/2022-2023-budget-information>

Before I continue, I want to thank everyone who participated in Simsbury's Clean-up Day on Saturday. Thank you all for giving up your Saturday morning to pick up trash and recyclables around town. Special thanks to Deputy First Selectman Amber Abbuhl for her organizational skills, and to Tom Roy and Tom Tyburski who were indispensable in making it all happen.

The Personnel Subcommittee met last week to discuss the exit interview process to ensure we have a standard, documented process on how we capture feedback from employees who choose to leave. We also discussed making sure current employees understand the feedback channels available to them while working here. This discussion led to the need for an update to the employee handbook. The handbook is posted in the link below on our website, and we will begin work on this over the summer. We will also confirm the role of the Personnel Subcommittee in making sure all voices are heard – from those who are employed to those who decide to move on, as long as it is in line with the charter. It was also decided that the Personnel Subcommittee would start getting updates on the 'State of HR', including grievances, with the timeline to be determined. [https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1216/f/pages/town\\_of\\_simsbury\\_personnel\\_rules\\_and\\_regulations.pdf](https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1216/f/pages/town_of_simsbury_personnel_rules_and_regulations.pdf)

May is Bike Friendly Month!

The Simsbury Public Library will be hosting a Bikes for Transportation, Bikes for Fun series of programs in partnership with the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee; Culture Parks and Recreation; and the Clean Energy Task Force. First up is an Electric Bike Workshop on Wed., April 27 at 6:30 pm, followed by a Fix-A-Flat clinic on May 12. The themes of bike safety; and biking as a healthy, inexpensive, and environmentally friendly form of transportation; will carry through this year's Bike Month celebration. New this year, make the Go-There-By-Bike Pledge and help Simsbury reach its transportation bike trip goal. Learn more about Bike Month at [www.simsbury.bike](http://www.simsbury.bike). The library will hold a Pedaling Bikes & Books event on May 21 from 9:30am to 12:00pm where they will be rolling out their new book bike, among other highlights. Stay tuned for details on the library website. As the weather warms, it is important to remember that bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists must share our

roadways. All are reminded that lawful, predictable, and courteous behavior help to keep us all safe. Drivers, please keep your speed in check. (Thanks to the Bike-Ped Advisory Committee for this information ☺)

June is Pride Month, and there will be events announced as we get closer. We currently have plans for our annual Flag Raising and Proclamation, along with a Pride picnic. Tentative date is June 4<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned as dates and times are confirmed. There is also an initiative from our LGBTQ community for businesses to be included in the new Simsbury LGBTQ-Friendly Business Directory. The Simsbury/Granby Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Partnership can help you get more information on getting listed.

Please check <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/first-selectmans-office> for my office hours each week. Email me at [wmackstutis@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:wmackstutis@simsbury-ct.gov) and I'll be happy to respond or call you back.

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## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager  
**DATE:** April 25, 2022

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### **CORONAVIRUS UPDATE**

We are monitoring the state's municipal COVID alert system and are currently at "red" status for the period ending April 16th. This status indicates that we have more than 15 COVID cases per 100,000 residents. We are at 18 COVID cases per 100,000 residents. Over the most recent two-week period we had a total of 64 cases. We also had a positivity rate of 9.5%, an increase from the prior period's rate of 6.6%. As a reminder, this data does not include positive test results from at-home test kits.

All counties in Connecticut are considered to be "Low" according to the CDC Community Levels categorization. For additional information on why the CDC changed from measuring Community Transmission to Community Levels, please click on this link <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/community-levels.html>

On Monday, April 4, 2022, the Town of Simsbury started to make a supply of COVID test kits available for pick-up by the general public at the Simsbury Public Library, 725 Hopmeadow Street. Distribution will be limited to one test kit per individual per visit (each kit contains two tests). Kits will be distributed on a first come, first served basis while supplies last.

U.S. households can place a second order for free, at-home COVID-19 rapid tests (4 tests per order). The link to order is: <https://www.covidtests.gov>.

Data from the state ending April 20th reports that 22,685 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, or 89.33% of the population, while 82.63% of our residents or 20,985 people are now fully vaccinated. Additionally, 13,566 Simsbury residents, or 53.42% of the population, have received an additional booster dose. Further vaccination data for Simsbury by age group:

- Ages 5-11, 66.51% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 63.01% are fully vaccinated.
- Ages 12-17, 89.61% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 84.13% are fully vaccinated; 42.26% 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; 60.99% 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 99.89% are fully vaccinated; 62.73% of the total population of ages 25 - 44 received an additional booster dose.
- Ages 45-64, 89.68% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 84.80% are fully vaccinated; 63.96% 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; 91.2% of the total population of ages 65+ received an additional booster dose.

## DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

### *Public Works:*

- **Tom Roy Awarded APWA Management Innovation Award** – Congratulations to our Director of Public Works/Town Engineer Tom Roy! Tom has been awarded the Management Innovation Award for 2022 by the American Public Works Association. This national award recognizes an individual, team, or organization for the development, management, and implementation of a creative idea, program, process, or system that enhances the delivery of public works services to the public.

Mr. Roy is being recognized for the innovative procedures implemented in the Simsbury Public Works Department in the winter of 2020 in response to the unprecedented threats presented by the potential spread of COVID, and the potential for significant staffing shortages created by 14-day quarantines for COVID exposures. In order to maintain staff safety while addressing the critical snow and ice operational needs of the community, Mr. Roy developed procedures that allowed drivers to quarantine in their plow trucks during snow and ice events, use private camping tents to prevent the spread of COVID during rest breaks, and provided for contingency plans with neighboring municipalities and other first responders to provide support in the event of a COVID outbreak with the department.

These methods were shared across the state, New England region, and the country. The procedures implemented in Simsbury served as a model for other communities and their health departments grappling with the same challenges. Many thanks to Tom and his team for continuing to keep our community safe and for keeping our critical infrastructure and services operational.

- **WPCA Appointments** - The Simsbury WPCA welcomes two new employees as Waste Water Treatment Plant Operators to its staff starting April 25. Michael Morin, has experience in industrial waste treatment and Lee Schmidt who brings experience as an industrial mechanic. Both employees have knowledge that will compliment current staff and will be able to give guidance with their individual expertise. These positions help the WPCA to continue to safely treat wastewater and protect the environment.

### *Social Services:*

- **AARP Tax Assistance Program** - A big ‘thank you’ goes out to Tom Meek and his team of tax preparers for generously volunteering their talents and time this tax season. Tom and his team of 8 volunteers helped 152 taxpayers of Simsbury file 158 tax returns, all at no charge to the residents. 80% of those assisted were 66 years or older and 101 people were able to get a refund on their taxes. Many thanks to the Senior Center and Library staff for their assistance in supporting the program.
- **Energy Assistance Program** - We are wrapping up our Energy Assistance Program. The last day to submit a fully completed application is Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup>. Please call 860-658-3283 with questions or to schedule an appointment.
- **Renter’s Rebate Program** - Simsbury Community & Social Services will begin accepting Renter’s Rebate Program Year 2021 applications May 1, 2022. Eligibility includes: those 65 and older as of December 31, 2021 or totally disabled; gross income under \$38,111 for a single person and under \$46,400 for a married couple; currently living in Simsbury; Connecticut residency for at least one year. A list of required documents can be accessed on the Social

Services website and appointments can be made by calling 860-658-3283 or email [Rloveland@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:Rloveland@simsbury-ct.gov). Applications are accepted through October 1, 2022.

***Town Manager's Office:***

- **Earth Day Event** - A community-wide Earth Day clean-up event was held on Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. In total, over 150 people participated in the clean-up and over 500 pounds of trash was picked up. Items picked up ranged from discarded plastic water bottles to living room chairs and bicycles. Many thanks to all those who attended to help us clean up our Town. A special thanks to those that helped coordinate the event: Department of Public Works; Culture, Parks and Recreation Department; Deputy First Selectman Amber Abbuhl; Representative Hampton; the Farmington Valley Trails Council; and Paine's, Inc.