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## FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Eric Wellman – First Selectman  
**DATE:** April 26, 2021

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### **COVID-19 Vaccine Information**

The state is currently scheduling vaccines for people who are 16+ and live or work in Connecticut. More information on vaccine eligibility is available [here](#).

Starting Tuesday April 27, some clinics will no longer require appointments. [Here is a link](#) to see a list of such clinics. There are clinics in Bloomfield and West Hartford on the list.

- **Registration through VAMS:** for people with email addresses: [ct.gov/covidvaccine](http://ct.gov/covidvaccine).
- Those without internet access can call Connecticut's COVID Vaccine Appointment Assistance Line at [877-918-2224](tel:877-918-2224)

In an effort to assist residents who are currently eligible to sign up to receive the vaccine, sites within 20 minutes of Simsbury have been [compiled](#). You can find a list of places offering COVID testing [here](#).

### **Budget Referendum Scheduled for May 4**

The town's annual budget referendum is scheduled for Tuesday May 4. Please note, it will be held at [the Simsbury Public Library](#) due to COVID protocols at the middle school. Polls will be open from 6am – 8pm.

The Town's budget information is aggregated [on the Finance page of the Town website](#).

Residents will be voting on a significant capital project, a renovation of Latimer Lane Elementary School. You can learn more about this project [here](#). Voters will also have the opportunity to decide whether the town purchases 288 acres of Open Space, known as Meadowood. You can learn more about the proposed acquisition [here](#).

If you need an [absentee ballot](#) you can download and print the [request form](#) from the Secretary of State's website. Absentee ballots are mailed out by Simsbury's Town Clerk, and there is a tight timeframe to get these turned around. If you are requesting an absentee ballot, I recommend dropping off the request form at Town Hall rather than mailing it in. The absentee ballot drop box has been placed outside the building where the forms and the completed ballots can be dropped off.

### **Expanded Hours at Town Hall and the Library**

Town Hall and the Library have expanded their walk-in hours.

#### Town Hall

- Open Monday and Wednesday 8:30am – 4:30pm; Fridays from 8:30am – 1:00pm
- Visitors will be checked in at the central reception desk and screened for their health status.
- Only one patron will be permitted to visit a department at any given time. Note: when someone is doing research in the vault, we can often accommodate another customer at the Clerk's Office. We are also allowing more than one customer per department when someone is assisting a person with a disability.
- Patrons are still encouraged to conduct business by phone, mail, email, or online when possible.

#### Simsbury Public Library

- Open Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30am – 8:00pm; Saturday from 9:30am – 5:30pm
- One hour of computer use is available on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10am – 5:00pm; to make an appointment call 860-658-7663 and select option 2.

- Curbside service is available on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The department of Community and Social Services continues to provide its food programs, daily virtual programming, and is accepting applications for energy assistance. The department will begin taking applications for Renters' Rebate on June 1. The Senior Center is currently offering tax assistance in partnership with AARP. Call 860-658-3283 for additional information.

We receive questions from residents about why our town facilities aren't more fully open. There are a couple of important reasons. First, the Town has a small custodial staff. In order to keep up with stringent cleaning protocols, we have to alternate the days that Town Hall and the Library are open. Second, staff has been alternating days they are working in person, allowing the Town to preserve a portion of its workforce if we had a major quarantining situation. Our re-opening plans are developed in close consultation with the Farmington Valley Health District and building hours are regularly re-evaluated as more people are vaccinated.

### **SPIRIT Council's Let's Talk Series**

May is National Asian American Heritage Month and on Thursday May 6, the SPIRIT Council is hosting a panel discussion from 6:30 – 8pm. There will be five speakers including Connecticut's Attorney General William Tong. Register for the virtual program on the [Library's website](#).

### **Anticipated Paving Projects for 2021**

Each year the town re-paves approximately 10 miles of roadway. Based on the budget that was forwarded to referendum, the following roads are expected to be paved this year. Adjustments to the schedule may be made due to weather or other factors. Letters will be sent to the residents of the following streets, notifying them of the work:

- Bradley Road
- Camille Lane
- East Weatogue Street (Heather to Rt. 185)
- Fairview Lane
- Farmstead Lane (from Stratton Brook)
- Five Gates
- Heather Lane
- Laurie Joe Way
- Nod Road
- Old Farms (power lines to Farms Village)
- Quarry Road
- Simsbury Pines
- Simscroft Place
- Springbrook Lane
- Tanglewood Trail
- Wildflower Lane
- Wildwood Road

### **Sharing the Road**

As we swing into spring and walkers and bikers appear more frequently on our roads, safety and awareness becomes paramount. The Simsbury Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee is offering a virtual presentation on May 6th to assist drivers: "Pedestrians, Bicycles and Motor Vehicles: How Do We All Share the Road?" Sign up through the [Simsbury Senior Center](#).

### **May is Bike Month**

May is National Bike Month! Simsbury will join communities around the country in hosting activities designed to promote biking and bike safety. Simsbury's Bike Month calendar includes bike/walk to school and bike to work events, a bicycle maintenance class, virtual presentations on overnight bike touring and sharing the road, and a Bike Month happy hour. The popular Simsbury Bike Challenge begins May 1, and local cycling clubs will offer rides throughout the month. Learn more about the Bike Month calendar and other bicycling resources at [Simsbury.bike](http://Simsbury.bike).

### **Electronic Recycling**

The Simsbury Grange is hosting an electronic recycling event on Saturday May 8 from 9 – 12pm at the Old Well Tavern. Drive up, bring as much as you want, and unloading is assisted by local students and Scout Troop 76. A \$10 donation is suggested. Green Monster E-Cycling ensures responsible recycling of electronics, storage media, computers, and accessories. Visit [SimsburyGrange.org](http://SimsburyGrange.org) for more information.

### **How to Watch Town Meetings**

All Town meetings are broadcast live on Simsbury Community Television Xfinity channels 96 and 1090; Frontier channel 6071. If you've cut the cord, all of our meetings are streamed live on Youtube and also archived on Simsbury [Community TV's Youtube Channel](#).

I encourage you to participate in our Board of Selectmen Meetings. You can share your written comments to be read to Ericka Butler: [ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov). You can also receive a link to join our virtual meetings. Send at email to Tom Fitzgerald: [tfitzgerald@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:tfitzgerald@simsbury-ct.gov).

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## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager  
**DATE:** April 26, 2021

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### CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

We are monitoring the state's municipal COVID alert system and are currently at "yellow" status, indicating that we have more than 5 but less than 10 COVID cases per 100,000 residents. Our positive cases for the 2-week period ending April 17<sup>th</sup> was 8.6 cases per 100,000 residents (a decrease from 12.6 on April 10<sup>th</sup>) and our COVID positivity rate for those being tested was 2.3%, (a decrease from 3 % on April 10<sup>th</sup>). We are currently at 30 positive cases over the most recent 2-week period ending April 17<sup>th</sup>, which is a decrease from 44 cases the prior 2-week period ending April 10<sup>th</sup>. We went from 13 cases to 17 cases in the most recent week.

Preliminary data from the state ending April 14<sup>th</sup> reports that 15,593 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the vaccine, or 61.4% of the population. 102.2% of people in town over the age of 75 have received their first dose, and 122.7% of residents between the ages of 65-74 (state underestimated the number of persons living in town over the age of 65, thus the percentages have exceeded 100).

Like many businesses and organizations, the rise of COVID-19 is affecting our workforce. We are fortunate that our workforce has largely remained healthy. However, for the month of April we have had 5 staff members quarantined and 2 positive cases. As a result, we are experiencing temporary staffing shortages at times and our response time for non-emergency situations may be delayed. I want to acknowledge and thank my staff for continuing to engage in safe practices at work, ensuring that our critical infrastructure and services remain operational during this period.

Public health and safety is our predominant priority. We continue to closely monitor the status of the virus in our community and reassess both Town Hall and the Library being open to walk-in visitors. Tentatively, Town Hall, the Library, and Eno will resume pre-COVID walk-in hours on June 1<sup>st</sup>. However, in-person programs, events, and gatherings will be phased in more gradually throughout the summer.

At this time, both the Town Hall and Library remain open to walk-in visitors for limited hours and uses. In-person visits to Town Hall can be conducted from 8:30AM to 4:30PM on Mondays, Wednesdays and 8:30AM to 1:00PM on Fridays. The Library has their pre-COVID hours on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for walk-in visitors. Those hours are: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 9:30AM - 8:30PM and Saturdays, 9:30AM - 5:30PM. Patrons may browse and check-out materials during their visit. Appointments for computer use Monday-Friday 10AM - 5PM may be made by contacting the Information Desk, one hour of computer use per person, per day and one hour of workspace use in the Business & Career Center per person, per day is permitted. During all other times the building will remain closed to walk-in visitors; services are available through [curbside pickup](#) for those uncomfortable coming into the building and reference librarians are available by phone Monday-Friday, from 10:00AM to 5:00PM to answer questions.

For more detailed information regarding Town Hall and the Library receiving in-person visitors, please use this link: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/home/news/town-hall-library-to-welcome-back-in-person-visitors-on-a-limited-basis-beginning-the-week> Town employees continue to report to duty at all locations, and are still available to schedule in-person appointments during normal business hours for

services that cannot be completed by phone, mail, email, or virtually, please see a list of our [online services](#) for items and services that you can use from home.

The Transfer Station, playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, skate park, parks, open space parcels and trails remain open. If you are utilizing these facilities please observe rules and public health guidelines regarding face coverings, gathering sizes, and social distancing.

Eno Memorial Hall/Senior Center remains closed for walk-ins at this time, and will tentatively resume normal business hours for walk-ins on June 1<sup>st</sup>. However, the Department continues to provide services such as our food program and energy assistance. We will continue to provide a weekly hot lunch for seniors (pick-up only), daily zoom opportunities, limited Dial-A-Ride services, and our bi-monthly newsletter.

Our Social Services Department continues to assist residents experiencing food insecurity. Our most recent Cheese Day program assisted 98 households and included 27 homebound deliveries and 19 kid friendly bags. At the height of the pandemic we saw an approximately 75% increase in participation in our food program; we are now at approximately a 25% increase over pre-COVID levels of participation.

Meetings of town agencies will continue to be held virtually through at least May 20<sup>th</sup>. Staff is researching in-person and remote technology options for meetings post-May 20<sup>th</sup>. Meetings are currently held utilizing Zoom and are broadcast on SCTV's television channels and SCTV's You Tube channel. Agenda items that are being discussed at a meeting will be posted online for the public to view.

Our Simsbury Main Street Partnership, Simsbury Chamber of Commerce, and our Business Resource Librarian Andrew Sherman have been doing a phenomenal job supporting our business community during this difficult time. For information regarding local businesses that remain open please visit [www.shopsimsbury.com](http://www.shopsimsbury.com). Information can be found here highlighting the good work Simsbury has done supporting local restaurants during the recovery: <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/home/news/outdoor-dining-restrictions-relaxed-through-march-31-2022-simsbury-streamlines-approval>

## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS**

- ***Meadowood Special Town Meeting:*** On April 24<sup>th</sup> the Town held its special Town Meeting on Meadowood as required by Charter. We had 62 voters and electors check-in and attend the meeting, along with a small number of staff and guests. Many thanks to those that helped with logistics to make the meeting a success: Town Attorney Bob DeCrescenzo, Melissa Appleby, Tom Fitzgerald, Ericka Butler, Tom Tyburski, Orlando Casiano, Tom Roy, Erik Davis, Susan Salina, Karen Cortes and all of our staff members that assisted on Saturday.

## **DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES**

### ***Engineering:***

- Cleaning of water mains in various parts of Simsbury will occur on April 27 from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m: Bradley Rd, East Weatogue St, Heather Ln, Pinnacle Mtn Rd, Terrys Plain Rd, and Riverside Rd. Water discoloration and loss in water pressure may occur during this time. The possible discoloration is from natural settlement in the mains rather than foreign substances mixing into the water. A schedule of when and where the work will occur is available at: [www.aquarionwater.com/alerts](http://www.aquarionwater.com/alerts) and the contact information for Aquarion Customer Service is 1-800-732-9678 or [cs@aquarionwater.com](mailto:cs@aquarionwater.com).
- We have recently been informed that the Farmington River Trail in Stratton Brook State Park between Stratton Brook Road and Stratton Brook Park will be closed to the public from Monday,

April 26th to Friday, June 4th. This section of trail will, however, be open on weekends and on Memorial Day. This closure is required to allow for the contractor working on the Aquarion Water Company Simsbury Centralized Water Treatment Project to install a new electrical and telecommunication duct bank adjacent to their access road to the treatment plant. There will also be other periodic closures of the trail during 2021 in order to complete other aspects of the project. For more information, call Aquarion Water Company: 203-337-5906.

### ***Library:***

- For the third time in 4 years, Simsbury Public Library has won CT Library Association's Excellence in Public Library Service Award. This year's award is in recognition of the work the Library is doing in partnership with SPIRIT Council. Adult Services Librarian Lyndsay Neffinger serves as the Library's liaison to SPIRIT Council. Congratulations to Lyndsay for her work in this role.
- On April 12, the 350th Anniversary Committee was pleased to dedicate a painting commissioned to commemorate the Town's 350th anniversary. The painting created by local artist Michael Grady was gifted to the Town by the Wellman family and hangs in the main stairwell of the Library. You may watch the dedication on the SCTV site at <https://simsburytv.org/v/bmL-mahgsaw>
- The Library has relaunched its 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program thanks to the work of Cyn Thomas who is currently completing her MLIS degree practicum at the Library. Registration may be done in person or online. Children who register in person receive a welcome bag, log sheet and a new book to keep. Progress may be tracked online and children receive milestone prizes of a sticker and paperback book for every 100 books read. Those completing the program receive a certificate of completion, a paperback book and may choose to be part of the Library's 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten Virtual Wall of Fame. Participating in 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten is a wonderful way to strengthen a child's early literacy skills. For more information visit the Library's website at <https://www.simsburylibrary.info/1000-books-before-kindergarten/>
- Mary Richardson will join the Simsbury Public Library staff May 10th as the new Teen Services Librarian. Mary received her undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia and her MLIS from Kent State University. She had most recently served as an Adult/Teen Services Librarian at the Cragin Memorial Library in Colchester. Mary is chair of the Library Connection User Experience Committee, a member of the Nutmeg Book Selection Committee and has presented at many professional conferences. Additionally, in her role at the Cragin Library, Mary has collaborated with the Colchester Youth and Social Services Department on a Middle School Gay Straight Alliance to give LGBTQ and questioning teens a space to talk about and explore LGBTQ issues and identities. Welcome Mary!

### ***Public Works:***

- On April 24, 2021, the Town of Simsbury participated in the first household hazardous waste collection day of 2021 at the Farmington High School. The event was held in conjunction with Avon, Canton, Farmington, Granby, and Suffield, providing an opportunity for residents from these towns to dispose of hazardous household waste, instead of filling landfills with inappropriate items.

The collection was well attended, as usual. In particular, a large amount of electronic waste was collected at this event. While we do not have exact numbers for this event, it was considered quite successful.

The next Household Hazardous Waste Collection event will be held on Saturday, June 12, 2021, from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Town of Simsbury Public Works Facility at 66 Town Forest Road, West Simsbury. This event will be open to residents of Avon, Canton, Farmington, Granby,

Simsbury, and Suffield. More information can be found on the Town's website here:

<https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/public-works/pages/household-hazardous-waste-collection>

- Blake Bowles recently started as a Plant Operator I at the Water Pollution Control Facility on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Blake comes to Simsbury after working in public water services in Virginia before recently moving to Connecticut. Blake has his Class 4 Waterworks Operator License. Congratulations Blake!

Dennis Bertrand also recently started as a Plant Operator I at the Water Pollution Control Facility on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Dennis is a graduate of Howell Cheney Technical High School in Manchester and is a Water Support Technician in the United States Marine Corps Reserves. Congratulations Dennis!

We are happy to have Blake and Dennis join the Water Pollution Control Facility team. Both will begin working towards their Connecticut Wastewater Operator certifications.

### *Social Services:*

- **Renters Rebate** - The Department of Community and Social Services will begin taking applications for the Renters' Rebate program starting June 1<sup>st</sup>. This application is for the rental year of 2020. Individuals and couples aged 65 & older and those legally disabled as of December 31, 2020 may apply. You must have lived in Connecticut for at least one full year. Annual gross income limits are \$37,600 for individuals and \$45,800 for couples. Applications will be done virtually, by phone and mail. Please call Social Services for more information or to apply at 860-658-3283.
- **Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar Screenings & Hearing Clinics** - The Senior Center will resume offering free Blood Pressure and Blood Sugar screenings provided by the Farmington Valley VNA. Clinics will be held outdoors on Thursdays from 11:00AM to 1:00PM, beginning June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Our Hearing Clinic will resume on Monday June 21<sup>st</sup> and will be held monthly. Please call the Senior Center at 860-658-3273 for more information or to sign-up for a clinic.