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## FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Eric Wellman – First Selectman  
**DATE:** April 27, 2020

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As we continue to navigate through an uncertain spring, my thoughts are with members of this community who are ill, their families, and caregivers. To those who are struggling due to uncertainty, loss of income, health, or the health of a loved one, please know that you are not alone. Simsbury is a strong community. We are a generous community and a resilient community. We are moving through what we hope is the worst of a terrible spring for Simsbury, our state, and our country.

I continue to be deeply impressed by the preparedness and professionalism of our local government, first responders, and healthcare workers. I am reminded on a daily basis that Simsbury is a kind and generous community. Our Social Services Department has received donations of food and money from numerous individuals, businesses, and religious organizations. The Town has received around 600 cloth facemasks that have been sewn by local residents. If anyone in this community needs a facemask, you can call 860-658-3283.

Our [Public Safety Subcommittee](#) continues to meet weekly on Thursday mornings at 8am to share information and ensure our departments and local agencies are acting in a coordinated fashion. These meetings can be watched live on SCTV and they are archived on SCTV's website, [SimsburyTV.org](#).

You can also sign up to receive updates from our elected officials in Hartford:  
[State Representative John Hampton](#)  
[State Senator Kevin Witkos](#)

### **How to watch public meetings**

Per the Governor's executive order, we are only holding meetings of our boards and commissions that are deemed to be essential. These meetings are closed to the public, but will all be available to stream live online. They will also be archived on [SimsburyTV.org](#). For meetings that include public audience, you can send your comments to [ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov) and they will be read into the record.

There are several ways to watch public meetings:

- Comcast customers can watch live on channels 96 and 1090.
- Frontier customers can watch on 6071.
- Live stream on [SimsburyTV.org](#).

Closed captioning is available. Instructions on how to turn close captioning on can be found on SCTV's [Facebook page](#).

### **You can also follow the Town and various departments on Facebook:**

- Town: <https://www.facebook.com/TownofSimsbury/>
- Public Works: <https://www.facebook.com/Town-of-Simsbury-Connecticut-Public-Works-Department-366602746711626/>
- Simsbury Public Library: <https://www.facebook.com/SimsburyPublicLibrary/>
- Simsbury Culture Parks and Rec: <https://www.facebook.com/SimsburyParksandRec/>

- Simsbury Community and Social Services: <https://www.facebook.com/simscommunityandsocial/>

We are using our Facebook pages to share information about closures and other news, but we'll also be using these pages to share ideas about staying connected, informed, and entertained.

### **Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge**

I'm excited to share that the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge will be planted this year. There is an incredible group of volunteers who put in countless hours maintaining the flowers each summer. The committee has informed us they intend to plant the flowers around Memorial Day this year, while following all of the state's safety guidelines. The Flower Bridge Committee says the flowers will be a symbol of hope during these difficult times.

### **Seeking Hometown Hero Nominations**

Since 1986, every spring Simsbury has designated members of our community Hometown Heroes. We're currently seeking nominations for the award, which recognizes residents who go above and beyond to make our community the wonderful place that it is to live. In this time of exceptional hardship we have also seen exceptional generosity. I hope you will consider nominating someone for their service to our community. Nominations are being accepted through this Thursday, April 30. You can read the criteria and submit an online form [here](#).

### **Town Budget**

With everything else going on, our process continues to adopt a budget for fiscal year 2020/2021. The budget the Boards of Selectmen and Education sent to the Board of Finance keep taxes essentially flat in the coming year. If passed, as is, it would result in a small mill rate decrease, equal to about \$50 for the median valued home. We are aggregating [budget information here](#).

#### Important dates in the process:

- May 5 – Board of Finance holds a public hearing that will be closed to the public per the Governor's order, but public comment will be accepted in writing. Please send to [ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov).
- May 30 – budget referendum (if executive order is no longer in place)

### **Ensure You're Counted in the U.S. Census**

The U.S. census continues through the spring and residents should have received a letter from the Census Bureau. It's an easy thing to ignore with everything else going on, but it's more important than ever that we are all counted. The census determines how much federal money communities receive for all kinds of things, including public health emergencies such as this.

The form takes 10 minutes to fill out online at [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov). You can also respond to the census by phone or mail.

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## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager  
**DATE:** April 27, 2020

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***Coronavirus Update:*** To keep our residents and employees safe, our town buildings remain closed to the public. Staff is working in our closed facilities on a limited basis, and we are continuing to operate by phone, mail, email and virtually through our [online services](#). Urgent matters may be addressed by appointment, at the discretion of staff. Our Public Works, Parks, and Golf crews have modified their schedules and work practices to ensure that our critical infrastructure is maintained and fully operational.

During this time, staff has developed additional virtual and online services to better serve our residents. Examples include online Library programming, virtual fitness classes, virtual building inspections, and remote notary services. The Library has recently started to offer Remote Notary Service on Mondays through Fridays between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM. Please use the following link to read the guidelines and access appointment information: <https://www.simsburylibrary.info/services/notary-public/>.

Our playgrounds, basketball courts, tennis courts, and paddle tennis courts remain closed. Our parks, open space parcels, and trails remain open for passive recreation such as walking, hiking, and cycling. Our parks and recreation team are working hard to maintain these spaces and keep them safe and accessible. People utilizing our parks should apply social distancing practices and keep safe distances from other patrons.

At this time the Transfer Station is temporarily closed. In order to meet the needs of our residents, both of our local trash haulers, Paine's Inc. and All Waste, have the ability to provide a second recycling bin, curbside bulky waste collection, and dumpsters upon request. Please call your hauler if you are interested in any of these services. For information on the disposal of paints and stains, visit the PaintCare website at [Paintcare.org](http://Paintcare.org). If you believe you have an urgent disposal matter that requires immediate attention, please contact the Simsbury Department of Public Works at (860) 658-3222.

Our public meetings and public hearings remain closed to the public pursuant to an Executive Order issued by the Governor. This Executive Order is in place and has been extended through at least May 20<sup>th</sup>. Members of the public can submit comments in writing for meetings to [Ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:Ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov). Residents may watch meetings of town agencies live on Comcast, Frontier, and online at [www.simsburytv.org](http://www.simsburytv.org).

The Board of Selectmen at their last meeting adopted two property tax relief programs: a low interest rate program for delinquent payments and a property tax deferral program for eligible individuals. Information about these programs is available on our Tax Collector's website. We will begin accepting applications for the property tax deferral program on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

We are regularly updating the Town's website with information regarding changes to our municipal services, programs and facilities. We are also providing important information through our "news and announcements" emails and our Facebook and Twitter accounts. Residents are encouraged to sign up for our email alerts, like our Facebook page, and follow our Twitter account. For a summary flyer on how to stay connected to Town news, please follow this link: <https://www.facebook.com/TownofSimsbury/photos/a.145890020109895/239634950735401/?type=3&th eater>

We have received many inquiries from residents asking how they can help our fellow community members in need. Our Social Services Department is accepting donations of non-perishable food items, toiletries, gift cards to grocery stores, gas stations, and laundromats, and financial donations for residents in need. For information on how to donate, please follow this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/simscommunityandsocial/photos/a.732997960244104/1311948715682356/?type=3&theater>

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). We received an inquiry regarding temporary sign enforcement during this time. During the crisis we have not received any complaints regarding temporary signage for take-out/delivery/we're open type of signs. Staff will not be taking a stringent approach to temporary sign enforcement during this time.

During this crisis I am reminded daily of the remarkable community we live in and serve. Our essential services have remained in place due to the efforts of our dedicated team of elected officials, town and Health District staff, emergency management officials, and public safety partners. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we move forward during these very difficult circumstances.