
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Eric Wellman – First Selectman
DATE: April 7, 2021

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](#).

- **Registration through VAMS:** for people with email addresses: 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](#). Dial-A-Ride will be providing transportation to the clinics in our service area. If you currently have a Dial-A-Ride pass please call Dial-A-Ride directly to book transportation at 860-693-6876. If you are not a current pass holder and would like to sign up, please call Simsbury Social Services.

Currently the Farmington Valley Heath District (860-352-2333) is taking the names and addresses of homebound individuals and will be working on scheduling home visits for vaccinations over the next several months.

Budget Update

On Monday April 6, the Board of Finance held their annual budget hearing. I want to thank the more than 165 people who participated, writing letters and joining in person to speak. The vast majority of people who participated, more than 130, expressed their support in favor of the Meadowood acquisition, a once in a lifetime opportunity to preserve 288 acres in Simsbury with a rich agricultural history and the site where Martin Luther King worked during his time in Simsbury. The project would cost the town approximately \$2.5 million, with the remainder of the cost coming from grants and donations. The Board of Finance declined to forward the Meadowood acquisition to referendum, denying the public an opportunity to weigh in on this project. Supporters of the Meadowood acquisition are holding a petition drive. If they collect the nearly 1,000 signatures required, this project would move forward for a public vote. This weekend – both Saturday and Sunday (April 10/11) from noon to 5pm – the Grange is holding an open house at 236 Farms Village Road for the purpose of collecting legal signatures. You must be a registered voter in Simsbury to sign.

The Board of Selectmen set the date for the budget referendum on May 4. Please note it will take place at the Simsbury Public Library this year due to COVID restrictions at the middle school. The Town's budget information is aggregated [here](#). The budget that was recommended and approved by the Board of Finance at their meeting on Tuesday April 6, would increase the mill rate 0.86% or \$68/year for a median valued home.

Residents will be voting on a significant capital project, a renovation of Latimer Lane Elementary School. You can [learn more about this project here](#) and take a video tour of the school highlighting the need for a new building.

Expanded Hours at Town Hall and the Library

Starting this week Town Hall and the Library are expanding 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.

Virtual Events

Join the Simsbury Aging & Disability Commission and the Simsbury Public Library in collaboration with AARP Connecticut to learn more about maximizing comfort and safety as our needs change with age. The virtual program is scheduled for April 14 at 6pm. It's free, but registration is required. Visit the Library's website and click on [Virtual Programs](#).

Each month the Simsbury SPIRIT Council is hosting virtual conversations as part of its Let's Talk series. This month the focus is Arab American and Muslim Culture: Dispelling stereotypes and recognizing contributions. The panel discussion is taking place Thursday April 8 from 6:30 – 8pm. You can register on the Library's website under [Virtual Programs](#).

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 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. You can also receive a link to join our virtual meetings. Send an email to Tom Fitzgerald: tfitzgerald@simsbury-ct.gov.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: April 7, 2021

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

We are monitoring the state's municipal COVID alert system and are currently at "red" status, indicating that we have more than 15 COVID cases per 100,000 residents. Our positive cases for the 2-week period ending March 27th was 16 cases per 100,000 residents (flat from March 20th) and our COVID positivity rate for those being tested was 3.1%, (flat from March 20th). We are currently at 56 positive cases over the most recent 2-week period ending March 27th, which is flat from the prior 2-week period ending March 20th. We went from 34 cases to 22 cases in the most recent week.

FVHD is reporting that they are seeing the most significant increases in cases among the 0-9 and 10-19 age groups. These cases are having a significant impact on school related quarantines. They continue to see household spread, travel-related exposures, occupational exposures and social gatherings as the primary sources of exposure and disease spread. This is a reminder that community spread is still occurring and mitigation strategies including mask wearing, social distancing, limiting activities with large groups are still urged.

Preliminary data from the state ending March 31st reports that 10,548 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the vaccine, or 41.5% of the population. 98.7% of people in town over the age of 75 have received their first dose, and 106.3% of residents between the ages of 65-74 (state underestimated the number of persons living in town between the ages of 65-74, thus the percentage has 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 March we had 4 staff members that were quarantined and 4 positive cases. For April we have had 1 staff member quarantined and 1 positive case. 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. 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.

Beginning April 6th, the Library resumed 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. 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.

To provide the greatest level of protection to the health and safety of our patrons, Eno Memorial Hall/Senior Center will remain closed for walk-ins until further notice. 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.

Meetings of town agencies will continue to be held virtually until further notice. Meetings are 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.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS

Addition to the Agenda: This evening, we have a request to add an item to the agenda under Selectmen action, fee waivers for temporary outdoor dining permits. This item can be added to the agenda with a 2/3 vote of the body. Materials have been emailed to the Board and will be posted online.

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Culture, Parks and Recreation: Jonah Wellins has joined the Town of Simsbury as the new Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at the Simsbury Farms Golf Course. Jonah is a graduate of the Winter School for Turf Managers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and has 16 years of experience as an Assistant Golf Course Superintendent at Connecticut golf courses and 1 year of experience as a Golf Course Superintendent in the area. Jonah will start work April 12th. Welcome Jonah!

Engineering: Cleaning of water mains in various parts of Simsbury will occur on April 13, April 20, and April 27 from 10:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. 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 and the contact information for Aquarion Customer Service is 1-800-732-9678 or cs@aquarionwater.com.

Public Works: The Simsbury Public Works Department will be participating in the Household Hazardous Waste Collection to be held at the Farmington High School at 10 Monteith Drive, Farmington on Saturday, April 24, 2021, from 8:00AM to 1:00PM. Simsbury residents can bring common Household Hazardous Waste Items as well as electronics and paper shredding to this event at no cost. All

participants will be required to wear a mask and to stay in their cars at the event— proof of residency is required upon arrival.

In addition to the collection on April 24th we will hold two additional Household Hazardous Waste Collections in Simsbury on June 12th and October 16th. These collections are for items that cannot go into the regular trash, keeping hazardous materials from being deposited into the landfill. Residents can find more information on which items would be accepted at this collection, as well as the schedule for the remainder of the year, by visiting the following:

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

Social Services:

- **Renters Rebate** - The Department of Community and Social Services will begin taking applications for the Renters' Rebate program starting June 1st. 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.
- **Sensory Friendly Spring Fling:** The Department of Community and Social Services, the Simsbury Public Library, and the Simsbury Aging and Disability Commission will be hosting a virtual "Sensory Friendly Spring Fling" on Saturday, April 24th at 10:00 am. Celebrate the arrival of spring with virtual hands-on activities including egg carton planting and virtual bingo. All supplies will be provided and can be picked up at the Simsbury Public Library. Please register by April 19th through the Library's website or by phone at 860.658.7663. This event is free. If you have questions, please call Community and Social Services 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 3rd. Our Hearing Clinic will resume on Monday June 21st and will be held monthly. Please call the Senior Center at 860-658-3273 for more information or to sign-up for a clinic.

Town Manager's Office: The Town is now accepting applications for the 2021 Hometown Heroes Program. Please use this [link](#) to access the nomination form; nominations are due by Wednesday, April 21, 2021.