
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Wendy Mackstutis – First Selectman
DATE: May 23, 2022

Just when we thought things were on the road to recovery, we are hit by another round of COVID cases in the Farmington Valley. My household was recently hit by a positive case after a double boosted family member had symptoms and tested positive. Quarantining and missing events is not fun, but it's better than the old alternative before we were vaccinated. Use your own judgement on how to best deal with this situation and stay tuned to the FVHD and CDC for any guidance updates.

I'm thrilled to announce that I've named Mark Orenstein our Public Servant of the Year, with the support of the BOS, for the Annual Chamber of Commerce dinner on Thursday night, May 26. Mark has been an asset to all of us given the tireless work he has done for Simsbury Community Media. I'll be saying more about him on Thursday, but he made it possible for us to stay connected over the last few years and to bring our meetings and events into your homes. He is also a member of the Library Board of Trustees, and a past active member of the Technology Task Force and Aging and Disability, where we worked together.

Please join the Town and BOS on June 4th for our annual Pride Flag Raising, held at Town Hall. Unfortunately, I have a family engagement that day, but I've asked all members of the board to speak who are available on that Saturday. I was given the honor to be one of the speakers at last year's celebration. In addition to the flag raising and picnic, we will be included in a community led project that will list LGBTQ friend businesses, and the Town of Simsbury will proudly display a decal to indicate that in all of our workspaces across town.

National Gun Violence Awareness Day is June 3rd, and everyone is encouraged to wear orange. We are planning on lighting up Eno Hall orange in observance. I read the following from a recent article in the Washington Post and felt it was worth sharing:

"Since Sandy Hook, the nation has experienced more than 3,500 mass shootings, according to the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit organization that tracks gun violence and defines a mass shooting as an incident in which four or more people are killed or injured.

The shootings have touched nearly every imaginable slice of American life: A Black church in Charleston, S.C. (2015). A government-funded nonprofit center in San Bernardino, Calif. (2015). A gay nightclub in Orlando (2016). A country music festival in Las Vegas (2017). A high school in Parkland, Fla. (2018). A synagogue in Pittsburgh (2018). A Walmart in majority-Hispanic El Paso, followed just hours later by a shooting in a popular nightlife corridor in Dayton, Ohio (2019). Asian American massage businesses in Atlanta (2021).

And just a week ago, a racist attack at a supermarket in a Black neighborhood of Buffalo left 10 dead and thrust mass shootings back into the news."

The baby formula shortage has impacted many families. Here is the advice that I received when I asked what to share with our residents. Social Services was advising that you call your pediatrician if you having a problem getting formula. Rep John Hampton also provided the following from the State. As the DPH and Federal agencies work to improve the situation, here is some other advice they have provided to residents:

- *Check smaller stores or pharmacies for availability. During the formula shortage, it may help to visit stores more frequently and buy formula as it becomes available*
- *If you can afford it, buy formula online until store availability improves. Purchase from well-recognized distributors and pharmacies*
- *Use caution when purchasing formula from individual or private sellers. You can report price gouging and scams to the CT Office of the Attorney General, or to local police*
- *Check social media groups that are dedicated to infant feeding and formula. Members may have ideas on where to find formula. Always check with your pediatrician regarding any provided advice*
- *It is unsafe to add more water to formula, make homemade infant formula, or use regular cow's milk, or other milk substitutes to feed infants. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends feeding infants iron-fortified infant formula during the first year of life when breastmilk is unavailable*
- *WIC families can contact their local WIC office with questions. If you are unable to reach your local WIC office by phone you can send an email. Find local WIC office phone numbers and emails by clicking [HERE](#). You can also reach out to ctwic@ct.gov or [1-800-741-2142](tel:1-800-741-2142) for assistance*
- *Call 2-1-1 or visit 211ct.org to locate community organizations that provide emergency formula*
- *Connecticut participates with Mother's Milk Bank Northeast, which sends most of its donated breast milk to neonatal care units across the state. It's also available for purchase. Please visit milkbankne.org/receive to learn about it*
- *The US Department of Health & Human Services has additional resources for families to use. Click [HERE](#) for more information*

The Board of Selectmen will be competing with our 'business entry' in the Simsbury Duck Race this coming Friday night at the Flower Bridge from 4-7. We have a souped-up entry, created by this year's father-daughter design team Sean and Ellie Askham. We are in it to win it! ☺

Last, I'd like to thank everyone for all the events over the past few weeks! The DPW Open House was a huge success, our Board of Selectmen bike ride was a great chance for us to catch up with friends in the community, our library was awarded the Silver Bicycle Friendly Business designation and we celebrated our Hometown Heroes at the award presentation tonight.

The dedication and spirit in our town shows through in everything we do.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: May 23, 2022

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

We are monitoring the state's municipal COVID alert system and are currently at "red" status for the period ending May 14th. This status indicates that we have more than 15 COVID cases per 100,000 residents. We are at 43.9 COVID cases per 100,000 residents. Over the most recent two-week period we had a total of 156 cases. We also had a positivity rate of 18.3%, an increase from the prior period's rate of 15.8%. As a reminder, this data does not include positive test results from at-home test kits.

6 of the 8 counties in Connecticut, including Hartford County, are considered to be "high" according to the CDC Community Levels categorization. The CDC recommends wearing a mask indoors, staying up to date with COVID-19 vaccines, and getting tested if you have symptoms when in a county with "High" community levels. 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>

The Library no longer has a supply of free COVID kits. U.S. households can now place a **third** order for free, at-home COVID-19 rapid tests (**8** tests per order). The link to order is: <https://www.covidtests.gov>.

We are once again experiencing a significant uptick in positive COVID cases amongst staff; this typically happens when community transmission is also high. During the month of May-to-date we have had 11 positive cases amongst our workforce and 2 staff members that have needed to quarantine. As a result, staff is wearing many hats at the moment. Please be patient if we are experiencing a slight delay, or need to reschedule, for non-emergency matters.

Data from the state ending May 18th reports that 22,750 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, or 89.58% of the population, while 83.03% of our residents or 21,086 people are now fully vaccinated. Additionally, 13,748 Simsbury residents, or 54.14% of the population, have received an additional booster dose. Further vaccination data for Simsbury by age group:

- Ages 5-11, 67.32% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 63.56% are fully vaccinated.
- Ages 12-17, 89.86% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 84.47% are fully vaccinated; 43.19% 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; 61.91% 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 99.96% are fully vaccinated; 63.65% of the total population of ages 25 - 44 received an additional booster dose.
- Ages 45-64, 89.83% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 85.12% are fully vaccinated; 64.55 % 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; 92.55% of the total population of ages 65+ received an additional booster dose.

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Culture, Parks and Recreation:

- A reminder that the preseason sale on pool passes ends on May 31st. Everyone is encouraged to go to www.SimsburyRec.com and take advantage of the preseason discounted rates.
- Town staff reminds residents to clean up after their pets when visiting our parks and trails. Please take your waste bags home or dispose of them in an appropriate trash receptacle.

Finance: I would like to congratulate Constance Allen on being appointed to the Accountant position in the Finance Department. Constance joins us from State Line Oil and State Line Propane where she is a staff accountant. Prior to that, Constance has experience in the banking industry. She has a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Accounting from Northern Vermont University and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Business Administration at the University of New Haven. We are excited to have her join our team on June 2nd!

Library: Simsbury Public Library has been awarded the status of Silver Level Bike Friendly Business by the League of American Bicyclists. Simsbury is the first library in Connecticut to receive this distinction. This award is in recognition for the many ways the Library has supported bicycling in town, and the Library's close partnership and collaboration with the Simsbury Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee over the past 9 years. The Library, in conjunction with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee, has done numerous bike safety, bike repair programs and bicycling incentive initiatives for all ages. In addition to bicycle racks on both the lower and upper level of the building, the Library will soon also have a bicycle repair station on the grounds, thanks to Youth Service Board funding from Community and Social Services. Furthermore, the solar chargers now located on the building's front lawn, as well as 64 hour a week access of riders to water bottle refilling stations and restrooms make the Library a favorable destination for cyclists.

Public Works:

- On Saturday, May 14, 2022, the Simsbury Department of Public Works hosted an Open House and Touch-A-Truck event at our facility on Town Forest Road. We were joined by the Public Library, Police, Fire Department and Ambulance Association. The event was a huge success, with over 700 kids and families in attendance. We also raised money for the Social Services food bank, as well as collected over 200 pounds of food. Everyone had a wonderful time and was quite impressed with the facility and gaining a better understand of the work done by Public Works staff.
- We are currently out to bid for the new multi-use trail from Tariffville to Bloomfield. The project includes nearly one mile of paved 10-foot wide recreational trail, with intersection improvements and related work. The bid closing date is May 26, 2022 and we are hopeful that work will begin this fall and be completed in the summer of 2023. Additionally, we will be bidding the installation of a new sidewalk on Hopmeadow Street from Hoskins to Wolcott Road. Funding for this project, as well as the multi-use trail from Tariffville to Bloomfield, is being provided via LOTCIP grants.

Social Services: On Wednesday, June 15, the Town of Simsbury Department of Community and Social Services, Youth Service Bureau, and local nonprofit, A Promise to Jordan, will host a discussion of the book *#OneChoice: How Ten Seconds Can Change Your Life*. The discussion will be geared towards youth aged 12 to 17, but adults are also welcome to sign up. The book is written by a mother in the voices of her two sons who tragically passed away after making the bad decision to mix opioids with

alcohol while attending a graduation party. Free copies of the book are available to those who register in advance. Register here: <http://events.constantcontact.com/register/event?llr=zee7wz5ab&oeidk=a07ej5bi2evf6fff58c> or email A Promise to Jordan at info@apromisetojordan.org.