
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Eric Wellman – First Selectman
DATE: June 14, 2021

It has been great to see so many people this spring I have not seen in more than a year as our community continues to open up. Town Hall, Eno Memorial Hall, and the Simsbury Public Library have all returned to their pre-COVID business hours as of June 1. In person programs and events are going to be gradually phased in throughout the summer.

At Eno, small group activities such as painting, ceramics, knitting, cards, and games are resuming. Dial-A-Ride has expanded to allow for three riders on a bus. Blood pressure screenings, blood sugar screenings, and hearing clinics are resuming. Exercise classes will continue to be held virtually for the time being. Cheese Day is continuing in its current format and Wednesday lunches are continuing to be held via drive through.

The Simsbury Farms Pool complex is now open for the summer. There was a nice crowd over the weekend. It was great to see families braving the sub-80 temperatures on Saturday. Excited for opening day, my 9-year-old daughter subjected me to a chilly swim, but it was wonderful to see Simsbury Farms operating more or less as normal. The capacity restrictions from last summer have been lifted. The town requests that people who are unvaccinated continue to wear masks when walking around the pool decks. Anyone who is not fully vaccinated must continue to mask indoors.

June is LGBTQ+ Pride Month

In celebration of Pride Month, two events are planned in partnership with the town. Wednesday June 16 at 5pm, the community is invited to attend a flag raising in front of Town Hall where the Pride flag will fly for the two remaining weeks of the month. On June 26th at noon, there will be a picnic at Schultz Park (next to Town Hall). After the picnic, the group will walk down to Iron Horse Boulevard and tie rainbow ribbons on the fence next to Rotary Park.

Talcott Mountain Music Festival is Back!

I'm thrilled that the Talcott Mountain Music Festival is back this summer at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, featuring 5 concerts with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Tickets are now on sale. Adult lawn seat tickets are \$15. Children 12 and under are \$5. Call 860-987-5959 for tickets or visit the Box Office at the Performing Arts Center 10am – 5pm Monday through Friday. Lawn seating will look like it did pre-COVID, without the bubbles we have become familiar with.

Simsbury SPIRIT Council

You're invited to join the Simsbury Public Library and the Simsbury SPIRIT Council for a virtual event exploring the history and significance of Juneteenth. The program will feature music and spoken word from students in the Simsbury Public Schools, a keynote message from Arthur Miller, reflection from Greater Hartford NAACP, and a community discussion with Tenisha Grant. It takes place June 17, 6:30 – 8pm. It's free but pre-registration is required on the Library's website. Click on [Virtual Programs](#).

Flower Bridge Dedication

I invite you to join the Town and the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge Committee for a long-anticipated dedication of the park – Hopbrook Landing at the Flower Bridge – Saturday June 26 from 10am – noon. Attendees are asked to register on the [Parks and Rec website](#), and park in the commuter parking lot on Iron Horse Boulevard.

Trails Update

Project plans for the Bloomfield to Tariffville multi-use trail are under final review by the State Department of Transportation for sign-off. The next and final step in the process is a peer review of the plans by CROG before the project goes to bid. Funding is in place for the project. If favorable bids are received, we anticipate construction will begin this fall and it will be completed late next year.

The project plans for the trail connecting Hopmeadow Street to Curtiss Park are nearly complete. State and federal permit applications have been submitted and are under review. Permits are expected to be issued in the next few months. The project is not currently fully funded. A grant for the project under the Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside is currently on a priority list and awaiting passage of a new federal transportation bill. The construction phase of the project will begin when funding is fully in place.

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

How to Watch Town Meetings

All Town meetings are broadcast live on Simsbury Community Television Xfinity channels 96 and 1090 ([Government channel](#)) and 95 and 1070 ([Education channel](#)); Frontier channel 6071 ([Government channel](#)) and 6070 ([Education channel](#)). 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 at email to Tom Fitzgerald: tfitzgerald@simsbury-ct.gov.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: June 14, 2021

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

We are monitoring the state's municipal COVID alert system and are currently at "clear/grey" status, indicating that we have less than 5 COVID cases per 100,000 residents. As of June 5th, our COVID positivity rate for those being tested was 0.1%, (a decrease from 1.5% on May 17th) with no new cases reported for four consecutive weeks.

Preliminary data from the state ending June 9th reports that 17,770 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the vaccine, or 69.97% of the population, while 61.89% of our residents, or 15,716 people, are now fully vaccinated. Further vaccination data by age group:

- Ages 15-44, 87.54% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 74.9% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 45-64, 80.42% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 73.39% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 65+, 100% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 100% are fully vaccinated

For the month of May and June month-to-date we had no staff members quarantined and no positive employee cases. 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.

The leadership team completed the next phase of our re-opening plans. We resumed pre-COVID normal business hours for walk-ins for Town Hall, Eno, and the Library on June 1st (with the exception of Wednesdays at the Library until the week of July 4th). We are asking staff and patrons to continue wearing face coverings in our buildings at this time.

Our Social Services Department continues to assist residents experiencing food insecurity. Our most recent Cheese Day program assisted 98 households and included 24 homebound deliveries and 22 kid friendly bags. 18 bicycle helmets were also given out.

Town agencies are anticipated to resume in-person meetings between June 28-June 30th. Staff has identified a hybrid/remote technology solution for meetings post-June 28th and is currently testing that technology. In aggregate, approximately 3-5 meeting rooms at the Library and Town Hall are planned for installation of this technology.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS

Meadowood Acquisition Update: The Town, in conjunction with the Trust for Public Land, is working towards a closing date on the Meadowood property for mid-September. There are many tasks associated with closing, some of which will require action from the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and Planning Commission this summer. Examples of remaining work include but are not limited to finalizing surveying work, updating the environmental review, and appropriating received grant monies towards the acquisition.

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Engineering:

- Aquarion Water Company has initiated a water main replacement project on Musket Trail, and the project is expected to be completed by the end of July. Additional water main replacements on Powder Horn Drive, Flintlock Ridge and Hawks Lane will also be completed later in 2021.

The project, which will replace approximately 8,740 feet of water main, is part of an ongoing program to improve Aquarion's water distribution system. Aquarion representative have indicated that they will work closely with residents to minimize any disruptions. Due to construction, residents should expect minor traffic delays and possible detours during the working hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Burns Construction of Stratford will be serving as the contractor for the water main replacement project.

To keep customers informed about scheduled/unscheduled work, Aquarion utilizes a CodeRED notification system to call affected customers. Aquarion encourages customers to sign up for this free service at www.aquarionwater.com/alerts-and-outages. Customers with project-related questions may contact Mark McCaffrey, Aquarion's project manager, at (203) 362-3070. For service or water-related issues, please contact Aquarion Customer Service at 1-800-732-9678.

- Aquarion Water Company plans to start construction of a new Northern Access Road to their treatment plant on or about June 17th, 2021. This work is related to the Stratton Brook Water Treatment Plant Project that is currently underway. The new Northern Access Road access road to the treatment plant will provide access off of Farms Village Road. The existing access road to the treatment plant off of Stratton Brook Road will eventually close to vehicular traffic. This new Northern Access Road will eliminate the conflict between the trail users through Stratton Brook Park and Aquarion vehicular traffic from Stratton Brook Road. The work will include tree clearing, followed by rough-grading and the installation of a replacement water main along the new access road alignment and final-grading of the access road. The work will generally occur between June 17th thru September.

Residents with project-related questions may contact Michael K. Hiltz, P.E., Aquarion's Manager, Capital Delivery, at (203) 337-5903 (tel), mhiltz@aquarionwater.com (email).

Finance (Assessor's Office): Please join me in congratulating Deborah Forbes, our new Assessor's Aide, who will be joining our team on Monday June 21st. Deborah has a Bachelor's degree in Paralegal Studies with extensive experience as an Executive Administrative Assistant dealing with the public and legal matters. She comes highly recommended by her peers and supervisors. I am pleased to have Deborah join our team and wish her success.

Police Department: The Police Department recently hired two new police officers to fill some of our police officer vacancies. The two new officers, Samantha Rosa and Jeff Vollmar, began the police academy on June 4, 2021.

Samantha Rosa has a service oriented work history that includes positions such as substitute teacher and tutor for elementary age students, internships with a municipal human resources department and private financial group, as well as sales/customer service. Sam graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Eastern Connecticut State University with a concentration in Human Resource Management and she is currently pursuing her EMT certification.

Jeff Vollmar recently completed serving nine years in the United States Navy. As a First Class Petty Officer stationed in Groton, his various responsibilities included supervision of personnel, care, inspection and maintenance of equipment and weapon systems, management of programs and instruction and training.

Officers Rosa and Vollmar are expected to graduate the police academy toward the end of the calendar year. After graduation, they will enter a formal field training and evaluation program for an additional three to four months. Congratulations and welcome to Sam and Jeff!

Public Works: On June 12, 2021, the Town of Simsbury hosted a household hazardous waste collection at the Town of Simsbury Public Works Facility. Collections like these provide an opportunity for residents to properly dispose of their hazardous household waste, keeping inappropriate and potentially dangerous items out of our landfills.

Over 600 vehicles came to the event from participating towns, including: Avon, Canton, Farmington, Granby, Simsbury and Suffield.

The next Household Hazardous Waste Collection event will be held on Saturday, October 16, 2021, from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Town of Simsbury Public Works Facility at 66 Town Forest Road, West Simsbury. More information can be found on the Town's website here:

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

Social Services:

- **Renters Rebate** - The Department of Community and Social Services is now taking applications for the Renters' Rebate program. 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 has resumed 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 Manager has been appointed to the Board of Directors for the Council of Small Towns (COST). "The Connecticut Council of Small Towns (COST) is a member-driven organization committed to giving Connecticut's smaller communities a strong voice in the legislative process. COST champions the interests of small towns at the state Capitol and provides resources to help municipal leaders meet the challenges they face as chief executives of the state's 142 smaller communities. Of the 169 local governments in the State of Connecticut, 142 are suburban and rural jurisdictions with 35,000 or less in population. Small towns are home to over a million state citizens and taxpayers. The Connecticut Council of Small Towns was founded in the belief that local government leaders from these smaller towns – and their residents – needed a strong voice within the legislative and regulatory decision-making arenas, both in Hartford and in Washington, D.C. Since its establishment in 1975, COST has provided that voice. (Source: COST website)"