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## FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Eric Wellman – First Selectman  
**DATE:** June 28, 2021

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### **American Rescue Plan Act**

The American Rescue Plan Act, known as ARPA, is delivering \$350 billion to state and local governments across the country. Simsbury is anticipating more than \$7 million. At our Board of Selectmen meeting on June 14, we formed a work group with Sean Askham and Wendy Mackstutis representing the Board of Selectmen. The work group will provide a recommendation on how the money will be invested. It is fairly restrictive how the money can be used, which is primarily intended to help communities overcome the negative effects of COVID. This is a rare opportunity for communities across the country to see this influx of money and in Simsbury we want to be as thoughtful and transparent as possible. Going forward, I will provide updates in this space on the progress of the work group and how the public can be engaged. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities provides more information on the [American Rescue Plan](#), and how state and local governments can use this money.

### **Congratulations to our 2021 Hometown Heroes**

Each year the Board of Selectmen honors our Hometown Heroes; people and organizations who have touched the Simsbury community through a deed or service. The ceremony took place on the lawn of Town Hall on June 28<sup>th</sup> and we had the opportunity to recognize two organizations that played a critical role in the COVID-19 pandemic: The Farmington Valley Visiting Nurses Association and the Farmington Valley Health District. The work of these organizations and their volunteers has been nothing short of incredible. We also celebrated the Flower Bridge Executive Committee, including Jan Lintner, Deeg Mackay, and Sharene Wassell. Lori George and Carolyn Clement were recognized for their work as administrators on the Simsbury Neighbors Unite Facebook group. New York University student, Kevin Kurian, was recognized for bringing awareness about systemic racism and how it affects our community. The Hometown Hero Committee also recognized Bob Kane for his more than 40 years of service to the Simsbury community, first at Fitzgerald's Food and later as owner of Kane's Market. From all of us in town, we wish Bob a happy and well-deserved retirement!

### **350<sup>th</sup> Celebration & Park Dedication**

Simsbury continued its celebration of its 350<sup>th</sup> birthday with a ribbon cutting and dedication of Hopbrook Landing Park at the Flower Bridge last Saturday. It was a beautiful day where we recognized the numerous boards, organizations, and individuals that contributed to making this park possible. I have a special appreciation for the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge Committee, whose volunteers maintain the flowers. The bridge and park have never looked so good.

Also, a huge shout-out to the volunteers on the 350<sup>th</sup> Committee for their hard work and creativity over this very difficult year. When you visit the Flower Bridge, you can see the baby sycamore tree that has been planted and donated to the town by the 350<sup>th</sup> Committee. While we are in Simsbury's 351<sup>st</sup> year, we are not yet done celebrating the 350<sup>th</sup>! A full list of events can be found at [Simsbury350.com](http://Simsbury350.com), including the closing gala held at the Riverview on September 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **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 \$25. 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.

### **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.

### **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 Board of Selectmen Meetings**

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

Every regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen begins with public audience. Now that we are meeting again in person, you can join us at our meetings to address the board in person. No need to pre-register. If you prefer to join remotely over Zoom, please email [TownManager@Simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:TownManager@Simsbury-ct.gov) at least one day ahead of the meeting.

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## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

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**TO:** Board of Selectmen  
**FROM:** Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager  
**DATE:** June 28, 2021

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### **CORONAVIRUS UPDATE**

Preliminary data from the state ending June 23<sup>rd</sup> reports that 18,035 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, or 71.02% of the population, while 65.28% of our residents, or 16,577 people, are now fully vaccinated. Further vaccination data by age group:

- Ages 12-15, 55.66% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 44.44% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 15-44, 90.94% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 82.04% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 45-64, 80.93% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 74.48% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 65+, 100% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 100% are fully vaccinated

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 19<sup>th</sup>, our COVID positivity rate for those being tested was 0.4%, with no new cases reported for six consecutive weeks.

For the month of June we have had 1 staff member positive case. 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.

We are asking staff and patrons to continue wearing face coverings for Town Hall, Eno, and the Library at this time, particularly while in common or shared areas of the buildings; we are re-evaluating this regularly.

Town agencies are anticipated to resume in-person meetings between June 28-June 30<sup>th</sup>. Staff has identified a hybrid/remote technology solution for meetings post-June 28<sup>th</sup> and is piloting the technology live this evening during the Board of Selectmen meeting. The recent state implementer bill will permit fully remote and hybrid meetings to continue. We are working with our Town Attorney to better understand these new parameters and should have updated guidance for our boards, committees, and commissions in the coming weeks.

### **BOARD OF SELECTMEN BUSINESS**

*State Legislation Allowing for Recreational Use of Marijuana:* Our Town Attorney is preparing a summary of the impact this legislation will have on our municipal services. Examples include personnel policies, facilities use policies, parks regulations, land use regulations, revenue collection, and law enforcement practices. Staff will provide an update to the Board when more information is available, and seek policy guidance.

## **DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES**

**Library:** The Library has received a grant award in the amount of \$19,401 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the CT State Library to support its ARPA grant projects. The Library will be able to proceed with purchasing a book bike to be used in community outreach and engagement and contactless pickup lockers which will expand curbside pickup to 24/7.

**Police Department:** Sergeant Matt Christian has been promoted to Lieutenant effective July 1, 2021. Sergeant Matt Christian joined the department in 2004. As a patrol officer, he took on many ancillary duties that included procurement, supplies and training new officers. He was assigned to the Detective Division where he investigated some very complex investigations, a variety of major crimes and performed work that required extensive collaboration with other agencies, individuals, and businesses. He excelled as an instructor, an investigator and in overall performance. He was promoted to sergeant in 2015 and assigned to the training/administration position. He continued to excel while expanding his responsibilities and duties that impact the entire department, such as training, professional standards and other administrative functions.

He holds a Bachelor's degree in psychology. He is certified to teach elementary education and special education. He also holds the following certifications: Connecticut Municipal Legal Traffic Authority Program; Finding Words Certification; Police Bicycle Officer Certification; and Taser, CPR, First Aid, AED Instructor.

Officer Laurel Harrington has been promoted to Sergeant, effective July 1, 2021. Officer Laurel Harrington joined the department in 2013. As a patrol officer, she became an instructor for Project Lifesaver, Women's Self-Defense and she trained new officers. She is an investigator with our regional accident reconstruction team and a child safety seat technician. She has served as a school resource officer in the high school since 2019. She is highly active with our efforts to support Special Olympics, serving as a member on the state council and as our Town Captain for Special Olympics CT.

She holds an Associate's degree in criminal justice and a Bachelor's degree in sociology. Officer Harrington is expected to complete a Master's of Public Administration (MPA) degree this summer.

Sergeant Christian and Officer Harrington have demonstrated commitment to this community, to their co-workers and to our profession. They have exercised the knowledge, skills and abilities to succeed in these new roles. I am confident they will both succeed in their new roles. Congratulations to both!

**Social Services:** Community and Social Services is hosting an intergenerational therapeutic goat event. On Tuesday, June 29th from 1-4pm we will welcome some of our furry four legged friends from Healing Hoofbeats. Goats love partnering with individuals to help them experience the therapeutic value of connection to self and others. Goats bring their curiosity and humor with them and are always ready to share their love! We hope you will join us in the fun! The first two hours are for our intergenerational audience and the third hour is reserved for those that need a sensory friendly environment. Refreshments will be provided. This program is free of charge and is sponsored by the Simsbury Youth Service Bureau. Call 860-658-3283 or 860-658-3273 to register or email [rloveland@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:rloveland@simsbury-ct.gov)