
FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Eric Wellman – First Selectman
DATE: August 9, 2021

American Rescue Plan Act

We learned earlier this year that the Town will be receiving \$7.5 million as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The money is intended to support COVID-19 response efforts, replace lost revenue that supports vital services and help retain jobs, support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses, and address systemic public health challenges that have contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic.

At our June 14 meeting, the Board of Selectmen formed a work group to provide structure and guidance to how this money will be invested in our community. Wendy Mackstutis and Sean Askham are representing the Board of Selectmen on this workgroup. At our August 9th meeting, we received an update on the group's progress. The [presentation](#) they shared provides a fantastic summary of ARPA and how Simsbury is approaching this unique opportunity to make investments in our community. At the initial meetings of the workgroup, they identified the need to create a framework for spending the funds, as well as a process for allocating the funds, which will need to be codified by the full Board of Selectmen. We also intend to seek feedback from the community and elected and appointed boards and commissions as part of this process.

Short Term Rental Ordinance Work Group

The Board of Selectmen has created a workgroup to craft an ordinance governing short-term rentals in Simsbury. These are properties that are listed on sites such as Airbnb. The work group is tasked with researching and benchmarking how other communities regulate short-term rentals and to prepare a draft ordinance for the Board of Selectmen. Chris Peterson and Jackie Battos are representing the Board of Selectmen on this workgroup. We also have representation from the Economic Development Commission, the Tourism Committee, and one member each from the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission. This workgroup was formed in 2019, but their work was sidelined by the pandemic. They have started meeting again this summer to continue this work. A draft of the ordinance has been completed. Once it's reviewed by the Town Attorney, the Board of Selectmen will review it and schedule a hearing to get public input.

September Feast

Mark your calendars for Septemberfeast, scheduled for September 10th and 11th at Simsbury Meadows. The event will have live music, food vendors, and a craft fair. It's hosted by the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, the Simsbury Junior Woman's Club, the Simsbury Grange, and the Simsbury SPIRIT Council.

Simsbury 350th Celebration

Due to the pandemic, Simsbury's 350th celebration has been reimagined and continues into 2021. It is scheduled to conclude on September 30th with a closing gala. Tickets are not yet on sale, as the location needs to be finalized due to ever changing COVID restrictions. Also, save the dates of September 18th and 25th. The Town will be hosting 2 free outdoor movie nights at the Simsbury Meadows Performing

Arts Center – both movies will be space themed! 350th merchandise, including a commemorative medallion, are available for purchase at Simsbury350.com.

Trails Update

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 CRCOG 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. You can register to join our meetings via Zoom to address the Board by emailing TownManager@Simsbury-ct.gov at least one day ahead of the meeting. You can also send an email to TownManager@Simsbury-ct.gov that can be read into the record.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

TO: Board of Selectmen
FROM: Maria E. Capriola – Town Manager
DATE: August 9, 2021

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

Data from the state ending August 4th reports that 18,566 Simsbury residents have received at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, or 73.11% of the population, while 69.49% of our residents, or 17,647 people are now fully vaccinated. Amongst residents **eligible** to receive a vaccine, 90.5% of our population in town has received their first dose and 86% are fully vaccinated. Further vaccination data for Simsbury by age group:

- Ages 12-15, 67.84% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 57.3% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 16-44, 94.86% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 88.68% are fully vaccinated;
- Ages 45-64, 82.01% of those eligible have received their first dose, and 78.95% 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 "orange" status, indicating that we have more than 5 but less than 10 COVID cases per 100,000 residents. For the week ending July 24th, Simsbury had 12 new cases, and for the week ending July 31st, 8 new cases. My understanding is that all of our most recent cases are amongst vaccinated individuals. Our positivity rate for the week ending July 31st was 2.4%. Through contact tracing conducted by the Health District, they are seeing out of state travel, large gatherings, and household spread as our predominant exposures.

The ten towns comprising the Farmington Valley Health District constitute "moderate" risk for [levels of community transmission](#) based on CDC definitions, while Hartford County and the state of Connecticut are at "substantial" risk. In areas with substantial transmission, the CDC recommends that everyone (including fully vaccinated individuals) wear a mask in public indoor settings to help prevent spread of the Delta variant and to protect others. This is important because new data shows that fully vaccinated people who are infected with the Delta variant might be infectious and might potentially spread the virus to others.

The Health District has asked towns to share some key points regarding emerging COVID related information:

- The Delta variant is much more contagious than other virus strains, spreading twice as easily from person to person
- The Delta variant is now the predominant strain, representing more than 80% of the cases in the Northeast
- Our area is seeing vaccine breakthrough cases, however, most of these cases experience mild symptoms
- Almost all of the hospitalizations and deaths are occurring among unvaccinated individuals
- Vaccine breakthrough cases are contributing to additional spread—we are seeing this in households and group gatherings.

- Anyone experiencing COVID like symptoms should seek a test regardless of vaccine status.
- COVID symptoms are similar to cold, flu and allergy symptoms. Do not assume it is a cold or allergies - GET TESTED
- Because the Delta variant is spreading quickly and easily it is critically important that individuals experiencing symptoms and/or have been exposed get tested, isolate and wear a mask until they get their test results.

Based on the CDC guidance and due to rising positivity rates of COVID including the Delta variant, all staff as well as all patrons visiting indoor Town facilities will be required wear a face covering regardless of vaccination status starting August 9th.

Town agencies started to resume in-person meetings June 28th. However, with implementation of the recent mask guidance from the CDC, some of our boards and committees may temporarily move back to fully virtual meetings.

At the beginning of and throughout the pandemic, the Simsbury Senior Center and volunteers collected supplies for and made 5,790 cloth face coverings. A total of 5,240 masks were distributed to the community. With the new Delta variant and the CDC recommendations to wear a mask in areas of substantial risk, we will begin making masks again for the community. The Simsbury Senior Center is collecting donations of cotton fabric (tightly-woven, quilting fabric, sheets and pillow cases in good condition), so volunteers can sew face masks for members of the community. These masks are given to anyone for free upon request. Donations for face covering supplies may be dropped off at the Senior Center at Eno Memorial Hall, 754 Hopmeadow Street in Simsbury, on Mondays between 8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Fridays from 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Social Services at (860) 658-3273.

Our Social Services Department continues to assist residents experiencing food insecurity. Our most recent Cheese Day program assisted 96 households and included 21 homebound deliveries and 17 kid friendly bags.

DEPARTMENT NEWS & NOTES

Engineering:

- **Traffic Signal Replacement:** The State Department of Transportation (DOT) has initiated a project for the replacement of traffic signal equipment and related work at the intersection of Wilcox Street, Hopmeadow Street and Library Lane. This project may cause some traffic delays on Hopmeadow Street over the next several weeks while work is being completed. Businesses and property owners in the immediate area have been contacted to notify them of these construction activities and possible inconvenience to their tenants and customers.
- **Aquarion Water Main Replacement:** Aquarion Water Company has initiated a water main replacement project on Squadron Line Road, and the project is expected to be completed by the end of September. Additional water main replacements on Gretel Lane, Weatherly Road, Ox Yoke Drive, and Eagle Lane will also be completed later in 2021.

The project, which will replace approximately 9,035 feet of water main, is part of an ongoing program to improve Aquarion's water distribution system. Aquarion representatives 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. Simscroft-Echo Farms Inc. of Simsbury will be serving as the contractor for the water main replacement project.

To keep customers informed about scheduled and 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.

Library: The Friends of the Simsbury Public Library are collecting donations for their annual Book Sale which will be held September 25 & 26 at the Simsbury High School. Donations are accepted on the lower level of the Library Tuesdays and Fridays 10 AM - Noon and Saturdays 10 AM - 2 PM. Items accepted for donation include: Books, games, puzzles, CDs and DVDs in good, clean condition. Please do not bring records, magazines, encyclopedias, textbooks, video or audio tapes or books in poor condition. Proceeds from the Book Sale directly support programs and services of the Simsbury Public Library.

Parks and Recreation: The Simsbury Farms Pool season has been extended and will be open 1:00-6:00pm for public swim sessions from August 23-31 giving families a few more chances to spend some time together by the pool before school is back in session. Daily admission prices for those who don't hold season passes are \$7.00 for residents and \$9.00 for non-residents.

Police: At a meeting of the Simsbury Police Commission on July 12, 2021, the Commission approved the hiring of Kyle Colby to fill a police officer vacancy. Mr. Colby has an associate's degree in Criminal Justice, served our nation in the United States Marine Corps and dedicated 5 years as a police officer in the North Charleston, South Carolina Police Department before relocating to Connecticut. He joins the department with considerable professional experience and training and a commitment to community policing. Welcome Kyle!

Public Works: Brian LaTulipe recently joined the Public Works team as a Truck Driver in our Highway Division. Having worked with the City of Torrington, Brian comes to Simsbury with several years of municipal experience and is quickly adjusting to the work flow in the Highway Department. Brian is filling a vacant position within the Department and is already contributing to our team. Welcome Brian!

Social Services: The Department of Community and Social Services is pleased to bring back foot care clinics at the Senior Center beginning Tuesday, August 3rd. Two additional clinics will be available on Tuesday, August 17th and Tuesday, August 24th. Registered nurses will perform a general assessment of feet and lower extremities, trim, file and clean nails, smooth calluses and corns, and offer a foot massage. The cost is \$29.00 and appointments can be made through the Senior Center at 860-658-3273.

Town Manager's Office: Due to favorable LAP (liability-auto-property) and workers compensation claims experience, along with CIRMA's financial strength, the Town and Board of Education have received a member equity distribution in the amount of \$57,471 from CIRMA, our insurance provider, for these policies. The distribution will be applied to the appropriate accounts:

- Town and BOE LAP Policy - \$27,586
- Town and BOE Workers Comp - \$29,885