



## Greetings from the BOF, BOE, BOS Chairs

We are pleased to present the 158<sup>th</sup> Annual Report of the Town of Simsbury. The goal of the report is to provide our residents and businesses important information about the Town's financial position and performance during the reporting period, fiscal year July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

The Board of Finance is a citizen oversight board that serves as the Town's primary budget making authority. The Board works in a collaborative manner with the Town Manager and the Boards of Selectmen and Education to ensure the highest quality services at the lowest possible cost, while ensuring long term fiscal discipline. A top priority of your town government is to make sure you, as a resident, have an accurate accounting of how your tax dollars are spent and a summary of town functions, goals and accomplishments.

We are pleased to report that Simsbury's fiscal condition continues to be strong with a Standard and Poor's AAA rating, the highest bond rating that a municipality can achieve. The Board of Finance strives to maintain adequate fund balances and a balanced budget that covers our expenses while recognizing the importance of keeping taxes affordable for our citizens.

Excellent public schools, historical charm, preserved open space, recreational and cultural offerings, strong governance, and quality services keep Simsbury a beautiful and award-winning place to live, work and retire.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your elected members of the Simsbury Board of Finance. We thank the many dedicated members of our community who give of their time and talent to serve on boards and commissions and Town and Board of Education staff who work hard every day to serve our residents and businesses.

Regards,

In March 2020, the Simsbury Public Schools system was faced with an unprecedented challenge—to engineer a distance learning program, over the span of just two weeks, that would meet the needs of all students. I would like to extend a huge 'Thank You' to the teachers, para-educators, administrators, and Central Office staff for their amazing work in putting together that comprehensive program. So many hours and so much hard work went into the effort, and the utmost professionalism was on display as we quickly converted to remote learning. It was truly awe inspiring, as was the cooperation of our students and their families.

When we think of what makes a high-performing school district like Simsbury so successful, we often think of the teachers, and ours have unparalleled talents. What is often overlooked is our human resource "infrastructure"—such as nutrition services, technology support staff, and custodians. The collaboration of all the members of these groups ensured that every child had access to a nutritious meal if needed, as well as connectivity and a device to log in for remote learning. In addition, within a very short timeframe, a comprehensive plan was in place for ensuring sanitized and clean spaces and new safety procedures for students with the hope that they would be back to the buildings in the fall.

Prior to the pandemic, the Board had been hard at work on a long-range plan for our facilities. The community showed up to share both their enthusiasm and concerns, and we have worked together to determine the best plan

community members. We are confident in the plan that we will move forward, and we appreciate all of the community support we have been shown along the way.

Regards,  
Susan Salina

The past year has brought extraordinary challenges to our town, our country, and our world. 2020 has been a year of hardship, loss, and also opportunity. It is incredible to see how the Town, schools, and other organizations are adapting to serve the public in unprecedented times.

I thank our Board of Education, administration, staff and teachers who have pivoted to multiple learning models to meet the educational needs of children and their families. In a year that has taken so much from us, I am thrilled that we able to open the pool at Simsbury Farms and the golf course which had a record-breaking season. Our library staff, with creativity and hard work, has been able to keep this amazing resource available to our community. The Town's Social Services Department has seen an 80% rise in families needing services and has been able to meet those needs, in large part thanks to the generosity of people in our community who have made donations to support our food and holiday programs. While behind the scenes, the finance departments for the Town and the Board of Education have joined forces bringing unprecedented collaboration and meaningful efficiencies.

The work around equity and inclusion that included the Pride installation in 2019 has accelerated in 2020 as the Board of Selectmen has made the SPIRIT Council an official Town committee. Serving as our diversity champions, the SPIRIT Council has organized monthly virtual programs and shepherded a resolution that was unanimously adopted by the Board of Selectmen declaring racism a public health crisis and laying out meaningful steps to move this work forward. I particularly thank our Police Department for their interest, introspection, and interest in partnering in this work.

Finally, 2020 marks our Town's 350th anniversary since its incorporation in 1670. While not the celebration we imagined, the 350th Committee has been able to pivot and team up with other organizations to offer activities such as the History Walk, reverse fire truck parade, and firework display. I wish you and your family a safe and healthy 2021.





## Town Manager's Office

*The Town Manager is appointed by the Board of Selectmen to serve as the chief executive officer of the Town. She is responsible for the oversight of all Town departments, implementing all acts and policies of the Board and all resolutions and ordinances adopted by the Town. The Office is responsible for the implementation of policies and initiatives, the administration of the human resources program, risk management, and supports the Town's*



*Pictured above: Town Hall “selfie” day, August 2019*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Completed the parks and open space master plan.
- Worked with the Department of Public Works and Culture, Parks and Recreation to design and install a permanent rainbow Pride Walk on the multi-use path outside of the Performing Arts Center.
- Implemented a Posting Policy for Town Hall and Eno Memorial Hall and a new Anti-Harassment Policy; worked with the Director of Community and Social Services to update the Youth Services Bureau Advisory Board procedures; worked with the Director of Finance to update the Defined Benefit Pension Plans Investment Policy.
- Coordinated and supported the Board of Selectmen work groups on prohibiting the intentional feeding of wildlife, short-term rentals, and the Town's debt policy, and tax abatement ordinance for volunteer firefighters and ambulance personnel.
- Analyzed the key financial issues related to the Simsbury Farms Special Revenue Fund and made recommendations to the Boards of Selectmen and Finance for addressing those issues.

## Finance Department

*The Finance Department includes financial administration, assessment and revenue collection. The Department's mission is to provide the highest level of fiscal integrity and department support through training, prudent policies and business practices within its procurement, payroll, accounts payable, accounting and reporting, tax collection*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Awarded the GFOA Award for Excellence in Financial Reporting.
- Maintained AAA credit rating.
- Completed the annual financial audit for fiscal year 2018/19 with an unmodified opinion from the audit firm Blum, Shapiro & Co., the highest opinion possible.
- Issued a Request for Proposal for financial consulting services and granted the award to Phoenix Advisors.
- Updated the Defined Benefit Plan Investment and Debt policies.
- Issued a Request for Qualifications for recordkeeping services for the defined contribution and deferred compensation pension plans.
- Completed fiscal year 2019/20 debt issuance in January 2020.
- Maintained tax collection rate in excess of 99%.



*Picture by Leo Collins*

## Information Technology

*The Department oversees technology systems and operations of municipal offices, and provides services to the Board of Education Central Office, Regional Probate Court and the Housing Authority. The Department participates in monthly meetings with the Technology Task Force and IT Steering Committee on technology activities, issues and*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Upgraded WiFi network enhancement and network communications, including data, voice, and storage at Water Pollution Control Facility.
- Migrated email services to Office 365 cloud-based solutions.
- Collaborated with the police department on upgrading video recording system that included interview rooms equipment and secure cloud-based storage.
- Achieved operating system upgrades for Tax, Town Clerk, Finance, Planning, Building, and Registrar of Voters.
- Worked on Simsbury Public Library Tariffville Program Room audio visual Project
- Department successfully configured and deployed over 60 devices to support essential and non-essential users with remote services technologies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Town Clerk's Office

*It is the mission of the Town Clerk's Office to serve as the liaison between the local government and the residents and patrons of Simsbury, making sure that information is easily accessible and reliably provided, all while delivering the highest quality of cus-*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Applied for and received \$7,500 from the Connecticut State Library as part of the Historic Documents Preservation Program. These funds were utilized to complete a back-filing project of the Town of Simsbury's Electronic Land Record Index. Cott Systems scanned pages from our hard copy land record books and attached the images to our electronic index, making for a complete index with images dated back to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1976.
- Began accepting credit/debit card payments.
- Began accepting deeds/conveyance taxes electronically.

## Registrars of Voters/Election Administration

*The Registrars of Voters administer elections, primaries, and referendums for the Town of Simsbury, conduct an annual canvass of Simsbury voters, and maintain the Town's voter*

### 2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments

- Susan Salina was sworn in as Republican Registrar in July 2019.
- The Registrars of Voters recruited several community members who completed state certification to serve as moderators for future elections.
- The elections team collaborated with the Board of Education to implement a Safe Polls Plan during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Due to COVID-19, the municipal budget referendum was canceled, and the Republican and Democratic Presidential Preference Primaries were twice delayed and finally moved into the 2021 fiscal year.

## Simsbury Public Library

*The Simsbury Public Library educates and enriches the community by providing free and equal access to information, resources and experiences, inspiring our community to dis-*

### 2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments

- Completed the lower level improvement project, including the new Tariffville Room program space on a budget.
- Recruited and on-boarded a Business Resource Center Coordinator to lead the Library's award-winning Business Resource Center.
- Applied for and received a Public, Educational and Governmental Programming and Educational Technology Investment Account (PEGPETIA) grant to upgrade the audiovisual equipment in the Friends of the Simsbury Public Library Program Room and add equipment to Innovators' Workshop.
- Library staff developed virtual programming, including the intergenerational Summer Reading Program, and instituted curbside pickup service for material to continue to serve the community during this time.
- Business Resource Center kept the community abreast of key information for small businesses and those impacted by unemployment and provided support for those whose employment or the



## Culture, Parks and Recreation

*The Department is responsible for the administration of the Town's parks, recreational facilities and recreational programs. The Department attempts to provide a wide range of programs and recreational opportunities which contribute to the environment, needs, and interests of the community. It is recognized that the programs and services provided by this Department contribute to the quality of life in the community, and are an integral*

### 2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments

- The Simsbury Farms Golf Course attained the highest year-end revenues in its history. Favorable weather in the Summer and Fall of 2019 and an increase in play in the Spring of 2020 contributed to increased revenues.
- Department worked with Town Staff and members of the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge Committee to complete the construction of the Hop Brook Landing at Flower Bridge Park.
- Culture, Parks, and Recreation Department Staff and the Open Space and Culture, Parks and Recreation Commission continued to work on the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
- Town Staff worked closely with local health officials, Town Administration, and State officials to close and safely re-open the Town's parks and recreation facilities. Parks Staff met



*Picture by Jill Henrich*



## Community and Social Services

*The mission of the Community and Social Services Department is to assist residents with their social, emotional and financial needs while welcoming the commonalities and diversities of all who walk through our doors.*

### 2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments

- The Directory of Community and Social Services completed all requirements to sit for the Advanced Social Work Boards. Department Director successfully passed the board exam and is now a Licensed Clinical Social Worker.
- Partnered with and provided funding to the Town departments to support initiatives and programming on equity and diversity, safety, substance abuse prevention, healthy family relations, and mental health concerns, focusing on our youth.
- Department served as an intake site for the Connecticut Energy Assistance Program. Department completed 107 Renters' Rebate applications resulting in \$56,988 rebated to our residents.
- The Senior Center hosted an LGBT Moveable Senior Center program focusing on The Road to Gay Marriage. Collaborated with Simsbury Public Library to offer monthly programs. Department hosted a Veterans Appreciation Luncheon for 75 veterans.
- Social Services transitioned its most extensive food distribution to outdoor drive-through distribution. It served an average of 140 households, with almost 30 homebound deliveries



*Veterans Appreciation Luncheon*

## Public Works

*The mission of the Public Works Department is to manage and maintain the Town's infrastructure, including roads, public buildings, and the transfer station in a cost effective and efficient manner that will benefit the safety and comfort of our residents and employees.*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Received a distinguished service award from CASHO (Connecticut Association of Highway Officials) for our dedication to providing high-quality service to Simsbury residents.
- Completed approximately 400 service requests from residents.
- The Highway Division crack sealed over 9 miles of roads and paved over 10 miles of roadway as part of our ongoing pavement management program.
- The Highway Division has been working to mitigate the damage associated with the Emerald Ash Borer and its devastation on the Town's roadside ash trees.
- Worked with the Sustainability Committee to submit the Town's Sustainable CT Certification application. The Town achieved Silver certification—the highest level of attainment.
- Department staff coordinated and executed the renovation of the Planning, Building, and Engineering Departments' office space in Town Hall, improving utilization of the existing space

## Water Pollution

*Simsbury Water Pollution Control (SWPC) is a customer funded utility owned and operated by the Town of Simsbury. The towns of Avon and Granby are also co-owners of the treatment facility. SWPC is responsible for the operation and maintenance of over 80 miles of collection system, five pumping stations and the treatment facility.*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Water Pollution Control Completed lining of 13,000 linear feet of sanitary sewer to eliminate the infiltration of groundwater into the system, thereby reducing treatment costs.
- The staff installed a new plant water system, doubling the system's water reuse capacity in the plant.
- Started the replacement of obsolete programmable logic controllers (PLC'S); these PLC's control the operation of the plant equipment and processes.

## Engineering

*The mission of the Engineering department is to provide professional infrastructure and building design, project management, and planning services to effectively sustain and*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Completed final project associated with the Eno Memorial Hall Renovations to complete the sound system replacement project.
- Completed construction for Hop Brook Landing at the Flower Bridge Park.
- Completed the semi-final design plans for the Rehabilitation of two town-owned bridges; Firetown Road Bridge Over Bissel Brook and Barndoor Hills Bridge Over Bissel Brook.
- Provided technical and administrative support for the Henry James Memorial School Project.
- Advanced the design and permitting for two major multi-use trail project segments to connect the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail to the adjoining Town of Bloomfield multi-use trail segment.
- Provided coordination and inspection of significant utility projects and completion of two



*Drake Hill Road Bridge Construction*



## Planning and Community Development

*The Department's primary mission is to engage the Town's residents and provide professional guidance and coordination in a manner which allows them to envision and plan for a highly desirable and livable town, and to implement and maintain that vision through the implementation of astute use of land in order to ensure a high quality of life for all generations. The Department includes the Planning Department as well as the*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Planning Department staff assisted the Zoning Commission in updating the zoning regulations so that standards were current with the National Flood Insurance Program.
- Staff continued work on comprehensive updates and consolidation of Zoning Regulations. Completed Phase 1 of the update and consolidation.
- Staff participated in business outreach meetings coordinated by the Town Managers' Office.
- Department provided staffing assistance to the Zoning Commission, Planning Commission, Conservation Commission, Design Review Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, East Weatogue Historic District Commission, and Aquifer Protection Agency.
- Zoning Compliance Permits were reviewed and processed by staff with \$8,175 fees collected.
- Staff assisted the Historic District Commission in updating the East Weatogue District



*Picture by David Kaplan*

## Police Department

*The Simsbury Police Department is a national and state accredited police department that provides law enforcement and public safety services, including operation of the E-911 Communications Center. The Department provides a full range of services under a*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- The Department maintained national accreditation through the Commission on the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) by completing an assessment in late summer.
- The Department completed a search for a replacement public safety radio system and secured a vendor. The final project is expected to save about \$1 million from the original quotes received during the initial search for a new system in FY2019. The system will provide a contemporary, reliable, and much-improved communication system for police, ambulance, public works, and the school system.
- The Department implemented Guardian Tracking System as a tool to recognize and document commendable behavior/accomplishments and as an early warning system for person-



*Simsbury Spooktacular Chili Challenge, October 2019*



*Stuff-A-Cruiser School Supply Drive, August 2019*



## Simsbury Fire District

*To minimize injuries, and property loss from fire, hazardous conditions, rescue situations, and other disasters, by providing excellent state of the art, life and property conservation, emergency and educational services while recognizing our people as our most important resource and the key to our success. The District is a separate taxing entity and independent organization from the town. The District also provides emergency management ser-*

### 2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments

- This year marked the Fire District and Volunteer Fire Companies 75th anniversary.
- The Fire District completed specifications and bid process for a "Quint" to replace our present aging ladder truck at Bushy Hill Station as part of our strategic 20-year apparatus replacement program.
- The Fire Company hosted a town-wide "Easter Bunny drive-by" and fire truck/police car/ambulance/public works birthday parades during the spring and early summer months.
- WSIM radio expanded live broadcasts of SHS football games and broadcast the SHS graduation ceremony live. The attendance allowed was considerably less than previous graduations

## Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association

*Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association (SVAA) has served the emergency medical needs of the community since 1957. In the past year SVAA's volunteer EMTs, augmented by our paid staff of Paramedics and EMTs, responded to approximately 2,080 emergency*

### 2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments

- In the past year, SVAA's volunteer EMTs augmented by Paramedics' paid staff responded to approximately 2,200 emergency medical calls.
- SVAA is an active participant in the Town of Simsbury's Public Safety Committee. SVAA has shared any surplus of PPE with the Town and local businesses.
- Simsbury has received its re-designation as a HEART safe community by the Department of Public Health.
- SVAA has accepted a newly remounted Ambulance delivery and maintains three ambulances



## Board of Education

*The Simsbury Public Schools cultivate the mind, body, and character of each student. We engage students with a meaningful and rigorous academic foundation so that they can contribute to a global society with integrity, compassion, and resilience.*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- The number of Simsbury High School seniors completing at least one Advanced Placement (AP) course was 226.
- Our 11th graders performed well in both the math (score of 591) and ELA (score of 580) portions of the SAT.
- U.S. News & World Report, the global authority in education rankings, reviewed more than 24,000, U.S. Simsbury High School rated #6 of Best High Schools in Connecticut and #326 nationally. SHS earned an overall score of 98.17 out of 100.
- On July 21, the Board of Education adopted an Equity Statement. Equity is the lens through which all district decisions will be made going forward.
- The Henry James renovation project neared completion before the start of the 2020-21 school year.
- Completed School Facilities Master Plan and Reconfiguration Study.



*Picture provided by the BOE*

## Housing Authority

*Dedicated to providing safe and affordable housing for limited income seniors and individuals with disabilities.*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Completed application for 2020 Small Cities Grant.
- Installed monitor and contracted with Scenescape for web-based digital signage to inform residents of pertinent information at the Virginia Connolly Residence.
- As part of the Housing Authorities marketing outreach hosted the Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Breakfast 2020.
- Continued partnership with the Farmington Valley VNA to provide monthly blood pressure and blood sugar screening as well as a flu clinic for residents at the Dr. Owen L. Murphy Apartments.
- They conducted monthly Resident Council meetings to provide a forum for residents to express themselves and suggest positive changes.
- Provide social programs for all residents, including summer picnics, fall social, holiday par-

## Probate Court

*The mission of the Simsbury Regional Probate Court is to assist individuals and families residing in the district who require the services of the court in an efficient and compassionate manner. The Court strives to ease the process as much as possible knowing that*

### **2019-2020 Initiatives and Accomplishments**

- Despite the town hall's closure due to the COVID 19 pandemic, the court remained and continues to remain open to the public via e-file filings, mail, and the telephone.
- During the past year, 180 applications were accepted for probate of decedent's estates. In addition, 179 small estate affidavits and tax purposes only estates were filed.
- The court processed 36 applications for Conservatorship and several applications for Guardianship of the Estate and Person of minors, Guardianship of the Intellectually Disabled, Termination of Parental Rights, approval of Adoptions, Name Changes, and inter vivos trust





*Picture by Leo Collins*

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A seal for the Town of Simsbury was chosen from among many designs which were submitted during a competition open to all residents of the Farmington Valley between September 1 and November 30, 1969. The winning entry was submitted by Allen W. Hixon and was later adopted officially as the Simsbury Town Seal.

The seal embraces the Higley Copper, the first copper coin to be minted in America; the Old Meeting House, a replica of which stands in the Simsbury Historical Center; the Tree, symbol of our natural resources; and the family group, which is the base of our whole society. The leaves on the outer circumference of the seal represent the hop vine, from which many familiar Simsbury names are derived, and the inner circle represents a fuse, symbolic of America's first such industry, which was founded in Simsbury.



# FY 19-20 Financial Information

## Expenditures

	\$	% of Total
Education	\$70,610,802	69.8%
Debt Service	\$5,095,833	5.0%
General Government	\$2,464,850	2.4%
Planning and Development	\$536,911	0.5%
Public Safety	\$5,056,113	5.0%
Public Works	\$4,154,912	4.1%
Parks & Recreation	\$2,445,562	2.4%
Health & Social Services	\$736,271	0.7%
Insurance & Benefits	\$5,790,709	5.7%
Other	\$4,294,568	4.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$101,186,531</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Revenues

	\$	% of Total
Property Taxes	\$91,966,373	89.5%
Intergovernmental	\$6,618,821	6.4%
Investments	\$649,944	0.6%
Charges for Services	\$1,342,843	1.3%
Licenses / Permits	\$750,908	0.7%
Other	\$1,438,070	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$102,766,959</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Mill Rate History

	Town	Fire District	Total
FY15-16	37.12	1.19	38.31
FY16-17	37.12	1.23	38.35
FY17-18	38.76	1.23	39.99
FY 18-19	36.42	1.17	37.59
FY 19-20	37.32	1.20	38.52

Department	Budget	Full-Time Equivalent
Town Manager's Office	\$ 467,648	4
Finance Department	\$ 369,851	8.8
Information Technology	\$ 330,380	2
Town Clerk's Office	\$ 232,295	3
Registrars of Voters	\$ 125,521	1
Simsbury Public Library	\$ 1,616,055	23
Culture, Parks and Recreation	\$ 952,379	19
Community and Social Services	\$ 617,466	5.8
Public Works	\$ 4,107,329	30.3
Water Pollution	\$ 4,019,347	10
Engineering	\$ 283,274	2.8
Planning and Community Development	\$ 653,487	4
Police Department	\$ 5,274,76,3	52.3
Simsbury Fire District	\$ 3,210,013	9
Board of Education	\$ 71,427,410	644.2

Board of Selectmen	Board of Finance	Board of Education
Eric Wellman, First Selectmen	Robert Pomeroy, Chair	Susan Salina, Chair
Sean Askham, Deputy First Selectman	Lisa Heavner, Vice Chair	Todd Burrick, Vice Chair
Jackie Battos	Art House	Jennifer Batcheler, Secretary
Wendy Mackstutis	Kevin Prell	Lydia Tedone
Mike Paine	Derek Peterson	Sharon Thomas
Chris Peterson	Linda Schofield	Jeffrey Tindal
Maria Capriola, Town Manager	Amy Meriwether, Finance Director	Tara Donahue Willerup
		Brian Watson
		Matthew Curtis, Superintendent



Town of Simsbury CT, 933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT 06070

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Town Hall Hours: Mon 8:30am - 7:00pm | Tues - Thu 8:30am - 4:30pm | Fri  
8:30am - 1:00pm

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