



Connecting Fairfield

Photo: First Selectman Bill Gerber and the Town of Fairfield Department Heads

WHY YOU'RE RECEIVING THIS EMAIL:

As a resident, business owner, student, or individual interested in news about the Town of Fairfield, your name appears on an email list that belongs to the Town database. You might have requested to be on this list or added your name to another Town communication in the past.

This email arrives in your inbox every other Friday and is official news from Fairfield's First Selectman and the Town of Fairfield.

If this email was forwarded to you and you want to receive official emails from your First Selectman, [click here](#). You can also unsubscribe from any newsletter you don't want to receive. Go to the bottom of the email and click unsubscribe.

[A Personal Note](#)

Dear Fairfielders,

Happy New Year!

We enjoy many opportunities that make living in Fairfield richly rewarding. I am truly excited about the possibilities that lie ahead in the new year for all of us. While we continue to face challenges that will test our resilience, I am confident that the strength I have always witnessed in our community will allow us to overcome any adversity.

I am deeply appreciative of the honor of serving as your elected First Selectman. Communicating with you is one of my most important responsibilities. I will be in regular contact with you through **bi-monthly e-newsletters** arriving in your inbox on alternate Fridays. Occasionally an additional email from me will take **A Deeper Dive** into issues that are more complex and would benefit from a more intensive examination.

Each email will include the following:

- **A Personal Note** providing context on anything relating to life in Fairfield.
- **Primary Issues:** An update on important issues currently under discussion in the Board of Selectmen's Meeting (BOS), Board of Finance (BOF), Representative Town Meeting (RTM), and other Town Boards and Commissions
- **You Should Know:** Information on events, openings, and celebrations that add to our quality of life
- **Make the Connection:** An e-introduction to the people in Town Hall—or others throughout the Town
- **Eyes on Fairfield:** A chance for you to submit your photos of Fairfield to be featured in this newsletter to celebrate the beauty and diversity of life in our Town

In this first e-news of the new year, I'd like to introduce some of the dedicated town employees in Make the Connection. We work best together when we know each other.

I want to hear from you! Please email your thoughts and concerns to me at **firstselectman@fairfieldct.org**. We're better together!

Bill Gerber
First Selectman

Primary Issues

Penfield Pavilion

Last night the BOS voted to approve \$1,429,950 in additional spending to begin construction on Penfield Pavilion to address the Notice of Violation (NOV) issued by FEMA. After approval by the BOF and RTM, the scheduled work can begin by the end of January and will include removing the existing grade beam as required by the FEMA NOV and replacing it with helical piles. Of the eight original "hot spots" of contaminated fill, one remains. It is scheduled to be removed before construction begins, taking place within the next few weeks. Additional remediation will be addressed as construction proceeds.

The decision about how to properly manage the Penfield site has long been a point of discussion for the Town. A Study defining the impact of storms of varying degrees by RACE Coastal Engineering was approved by the Town's three governing bodies (BOS, BOF, RTM) last March, but the Study was delayed until this past fall. This was unfortunate, as it was critical for the Town to have the results before embarking on any action that could negatively

impact the risk of storm flooding at the site. I was not willing to move forward with this environmentally sensitive and costly project without the results of the RACE Study and assurance that the issue of coastal resilience could be adequately addressed.

The financial approval by the BOS allows us to begin on a concrete solution, with a plan to be complete by summer 2025. We now have a plan that affirms that we can take appropriate steps to protect our fragile coastline and the homes in this area in the years to come.

Take a moment to review [the RACE Presentation](#) and their findings on coastal resilience at Penfield Beach (Go to page 144.)

UI Monopoles

We continue to mobilize support from residents, legislators, and businesses to fight United Illuminating's plan to install monopoles in the Town's historic, business and residential districts. Legal briefs are due by January 11, with a decision by the Siting Council to follow by March.

To recap: United Illuminating has plans currently under review by the Siting Council to take 19 acres of private property in Fairfield and Bridgeport by eminent domain, and to install monopoles ranging from 125 to 145 feet at a distance up to 40 feet from where their electrical lines currently exist along the train tracks. The Town and several neighborhood and business groups are fighting to eliminate or minimize the taking of the easements and the pole placement.

If this plan proceeds, it will be devastating to the Town's historic and residential neighborhoods and affected business areas. Please see the photos below, which show a view of the projected plan and its impact on the Pequot Library, as one example. The first photo shows the current area under discussion; the second photo models the horrendous impact of removing the tree line and installing monopoles.

Although some areas of Town will be disproportionately affected, this decision affects the entire Town, our quality of life, our tax base, natural beauty, flora and fauna, and ultimately, the interest among the public in choosing whether or not to live in Fairfield.

I urge you to educate yourselves about the devastating impact of this plan. The group Empowering Fairfield provides information and is working to fight this developing project. [Access Empowering Fairfield here.](#)



CURRENT CONDITION
Driveway Approach to Historic Pequot Library
720 Pequot Avenue, Southport



SantaCon

Following this year's SantaCon event that resulted in a huge amount of trash strewn about the beach, many Fairfielders have voiced their concerns about the size of the student gathering, the environmental impact to our fragile coastal ecosystem, and safety concerns. I will be attending an internal meeting for stakeholders to address the Town's concerns to be held at the end of January or beginning of February, which will include Fairfield University officials, impacted citizens, beach residents and members of our Police and Fire Departments.

A separate Town Hall has been scheduled for Tuesday, January 23 at 7 p.m. in the Rotary Room in the Main Library, 1080 Old Post Road, for public comment to hear your concerns. We invite you to attend.

You Should Know:

Winter's Here: Remove Basketball Hoops in the Street

An important safety note from the Department of Public Works (DPW): Basketball hoops are not permitted to be located in the Town's Right of Way. During winter operations the basketball hoops impede the ability of our snowplow equipment to clear the snow along the curb lines and in some instances damage both the snowplow equipment and your property. Please remove the basketball hoops immediately so that our Public Works Team can perform their work in an efficient and effective manner. Failure to remove your basketball equipment may result in damage and or removal by the Town.

Property Taxes are Due

3rd quarter Real Estate taxes, 2nd installment Motor Vehicle and Personal Property taxes, and Supplemental Motor Vehicle taxes become due on January 1, 2024 and **the last day to pay timely is Thursday, February 1, 2024**. On February 2, 2024 statutory interest accrues at an initial rate of 3%. Per state statute interest accrues at 1.5% per month from the original due date of January 1, 2024. This is a reminder that taxes are due whether or not you have received notice in the mail.

You may look up or pay your tax bill [online here](#).

One Book, One Town

The 2024 selection for *One Book One Town* will be announced in the Periodicals Room at the Main Library on Thursday, January 11 at 11 a.m. Copies of this year's book selection will be available to borrow in print or digitally from Fairfield's libraries, or to purchase at the Fairfield University Store on Post Road. While the chosen book is geared to teens and adults, complementary books will be available for children and middle-grade readers. The author will be appearing in person on Tuesday, March 5 at 7 p.m. at Fairfield University's Quick Center for the Arts. Let's all read together!

Fair TV

There's a simple new way to follow Town government on Fair TV without turning on Channel 70 on your television. Fair TV now has a YouTube Channel that can be easily accessed. [Take a look](#)—it's easy to keep up with Town of Fairfield meetings and civic events. You can also paste this URL in your browser: <https://www.youtube.com/@fairtvgovernment720>.

Town Boards and Commissions

Fairfield is blessed with a highly talented pool of residents eager to volunteer their time and talent for the betterment of our community. If you think your skills might benefit the Town, you can learn more about the process of serving on a Town Board or Commission and apply [here](#).

Board of Selectmen Meetings

Our next Board of Selectmen meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 31 at 4 p.m. Meetings are held in Independence Hall and open to public, and you can attend either in person or on Webex. You can also read minutes of previous meetings [here](#).

Make the Connection:

Meet your Town Hall department heads and make the connection with the people whose days are dedicated to keeping our Town running smoothly!



Left to right, front row: Budget Director Frank Magneri, Department of Public Works Interim Director John Marsilio, Parks and Recreation Director Anthony Calabrese and Town Librarian Scott Jarzombek
Back row: Community and Economic Development Director Mark Barnhart, Assistant DPW Director John Cottell, Engineering Manager Bill Hurley, Health Director Sands Cleary and Human and Social Services Director Julie DeMarco



Left to right: Purchasing Director Adam Tulin, First Selectman Bill Gerber, Building Official Pat Mahoney, First Selectman's Deputy Chief of Staff Jennifer Carpenter, Plan and Zoning Director Jim Wendt, Information Technology Director Dave Kelley and Assessor Ross Murray



Left to right: Water Pollution Control Facility Superintendent John Bodie, Tax Collector Dave Kluczowski, Deputy Fire Chief Kyrann Dunn, Conservation Director Tim Bishop, First Selectman's Chief of Staff Christine Brown, Assistant Human Resources Director/Risk Manager Peter Ritchey and Registrar of Voters Matt Waggner



Left to right: Deputy Police Chief Ed Weihe, Police Chief Robert Kalamaras, Fire Chief Denis McCarthy and Deputy Fire Chief Kyran Dunn
Not pictured: Controller Caitlin Bosse, Town Clerk Betsy Browne, Assistant Plan and Zoning Director Emmeline Harrigan and Human Resources Director Cathleen Simpson

[Eyes on Fairfield:](#)

Help us celebrate the unique beauty of life in Fairfield by sharing your photos with your community. We'll post one of your photos in each newsletter—we can't wait to see what you'll send us! Submit your photos at 300 dpi to firstselectman@fairfieldct.org. We live in such a special Town. Share with us the sites and sights you love.



Photo credit: Jack Bradley, Fairfield Resident
Enjoying a gorgeous view from Jennings Beach

We're Better Together!
