

# Town of Fairfield News

10/15/2021 - 10.15 Penfield Pavilion Update



Dear Fairfielders,

I am sending out an interim update to clarify some misconceptions about the future of Penfield Pavilion, which I know was all over social media the last few days.

This week, I met with my administration and our relevant department heads to determine a timeline for when we should stop taking reservations for events at Penfield Pavilion. This is due to the ongoing environmental testing and remediation required by law, and knowing that we will have to do something with the building since it was constructed in 2017 in violation of the regulations of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), under FEMA. In simple terms, the placement of the horizontal grade beams in the foundation of the building are against FEMA regulations and will have to be addressed.

My administration has been in discussions with FEMA since they notified us in late June, to determine which engineering solutions would be in compliance. Once we have an idea of what FEMA will allow, I will present several options to our community during public hearings to get resident's input regarding the best path forward. Penfield Pavilion has been rebuilt twice and frankly, I want this to be the last time we have to do anything to this building for a very long time.

I join our residents in their frustration that this was allowed to happen under the previous administration. The time and resources diverted for this entire remediation mess is a disservice to our community. The Town Attorney has been looking into what legal recourse we may pursue regarding the pavilion.

Unfortunately, I had to come up with a timeline, based on the information we have

been receiving from our Licensed Environmental Professionals (LEPs) and FEMA, on when action plans may be signed off on and when we can begin remediation and construction. We therefore have decided to stop taking reservations at Penfield Pavilion after October 31, 2022. I do want you to know that Jacky Durrell will not be affected and can still accept reservations for events.

As I shared in last week's newsletter, the Board of Finance (BOF) met to discuss the Town's \$9.3 million surplus, which was largely created from the Town budgeting for a lower tax collection rate than was actually collected. The Town also achieved savings on the expense side, mostly due to lower personnel costs. The BOF voted to transfer \$1.3 million of the expense surplus to contractual commitments for the retired Town employee healthcare fund. This left approximately \$1.7 million of the \$3 million expense surplus that they voted to transfer to the Town's Fund Balance.

During the meeting, I provided the Board of Finance with an update on the ongoing expected costs related to the fill pile contamination and public corruption that occurred under the former administration. You can watch that portion of the meeting [here](#). While it would have been my preference for the Town to use the remaining approximately \$6 million in revenue surplus to reduce the tax burden on our residents, I felt it was important to recommend the remaining surplus be set aside into the Town's fill pile fund, towards the mounting costs for remediation.

I realize some elected officials may be concerned we don't have definitive financials on these items yet. The projected contamination costs I presented are estimates based on preliminary evaluations by environmental consultants. Even at the low end of the range of costs, the numbers are high and will far exceed the \$6 million in surplus that I am proposing we set aside in the fill pile fund. I feel it would be irresponsible not to recommend that these funds be set aside for this purpose.

My goal is to be proactive as we know these bills will be coming due. We did put \$1 million aside from ARPA funds towards the fill pile remediation and we are awaiting another \$1 million in state bonding. To date, the Town has spent \$2.9 million in testing, remediation and legal fees.

The Board of Selectmen will have a voting item on the agenda for Monday, October 18 to set aside the \$6 million in surplus to the fill pile fund, and I will ask the BOF and RTM to do the same.

I will continue to work on this unfortunate situation and will update you going forward.

I hope you have a safe and enjoyable weekend.



Brenda L. Kupchick  
Fairfield First Selectwoman

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## **FAIRFIELD HARVEST MARKET & DOG HALLOWEEN COSTUME PARADE**

On a lighter note, don't forget the Harvest Market returns this weekend.

As a free event, open to the public, The Fairfield Harvest Market features **70 + vendors** offering artwork, crafts, pet products, jewelry, upcycled and rustic furniture, home décor items, and beauty products. Food trucks and vendors from the weekly Fairfield Farmer's Market will be there too.

### ***A Dog Halloween Costume***

***Parade***, sponsored by Pet Pantry

Warehouse, will start promptly at noon. Line-up will begin at 11:45am (along the side of Old Town Hall, facing Beach Road). Dress your fur baby in their Halloween costume to parade along Old Post Road. The first 25 dogs to line-up will receive a free Chamber dog bandana and doggie treats. Prizes will be awarded for costume creativity.



**OCT. 16, 2021 10AM-4PM**  
**OLD TOWN HALL GREEN**  
**611 OLD POST ROAD, FAIRFIELD, CT**

For more details and information, please click [here](#).

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Scrolling below you can find additional events, information and resources organized by the following categories:

Community Events  
Town Events  
September Updates  
Town Services  
Community Resources

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## COMMUNITY EVENTS

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### YOUTHFUL HEARTS CHOIR

SHU Community Theatre is pleased to announce "Youthful Hearts", a new community choir for singers ages 70 and older that will rehearse and perform at the downtown theatre. Open auditions will be held on **October 20 at the SHU Community Theatre from 10AM-12PM.**

If you have questions call 203-371-7956 or email [communitytheatre@sacredheart.edu](mailto:communitytheatre@sacredheart.edu)



### HALLOWEEN ON THE GREEN

Little witches and goblins (and their adults) are invited to join us on **Sunday, October 24 from 12-4** on the Museum Commons behind the Fairfield Museum. For more information and to register, click [here](#).



### RESTAURANT WEEK

Save the date for Fairfield's 10th Annual Restaurant Week **October 25 - November 7**. We welcome you to go back to your favorite, local restaurant or try a new place!



This year, we would especially like to thank Bankwell, for their continued support of Fairfield Restaurant Week, and Fairfield University, for their support this year as well!



For the most up-to-date information and a list of participating restaurants, please visit [www.experiencefairfieldct.org/eats](http://www.experiencefairfieldct.org/eats) or follow us @ExperienceFairfield on [Facebook](#) & [Instagram](#).

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## **UPCOMING TOWN EVENTS**

Phantoms of Penfield at Penfield Pavilion – October 28 at 8:00pm

- <https://www.fairfieldct.org/Phantoms-of-Penfield>

Hole in One Fore Hunger at Carl J. Dickman Par 3 Golf Course – November 6 from  
9:00am – 1:00pm

Christmas Tree Lighting on Town Hall Green – December 3 at 7:00pm (choir begins  
at 6:00pm)

Echoes of Sinatra at Penfield Pavilion – December 4 at 7:00pm

- <https://www.fairfieldct.org/Echoes-of-Sinatra>

Holiday Breakfast at Fairfield Ludlowe High School – December 11 at 10:00am

## **PARKS AND RECREATION WEBSITE**

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## **OCTOBER UPDATES**

### **FAIRFIELD PARKS & RECREATION 2021 FALL BROCHURE**

Check out some of the programs and events coming up this Fall ... [HERE](#)



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## TOWN SERVICES

### CPR/AED TRAINING FOR THE LAY PERSON



If you are interested in CPR/AED training, please contact the Fairfield Regional Fire School at [frfs@fairfieldct.org](mailto:frfs@fairfieldct.org) or call (203) 254-4708.

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### FAIRFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Fairfield Public Main Library building is open Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9am - 5pm and Tuesday & Thursday 9am – 7pm. Woods Branch Library is open Monday & Wednesday 9am - 7pm and Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 9am – 5pm. Both Main and Woods are open Saturdays 1pm – 5pm. **Both Main Library and Fairfield Woods Branch will be open on Sundays from 1-5pm beginning October 17<sup>th</sup>.**



As per the CDC, masks are recommended at all indoor spaces and social distancing is advised. **The Children's Department at both libraries is open for browsing and borrowing of materials, but play areas remain closed at this time.** Please do not bring food into either library.



We are excited to be continuing with robust Fall programming for Children, Teens, and Adults! There will be a mix of in-person, outdoor, and virtual events. **Please view our online calendar of events on our website ([www.fairfieldpubliclibrary.org](http://www.fairfieldpubliclibrary.org)) to see the offerings and reserve your spot!**

**Study Rooms are now available for use by persons 16 years and up at both libraries.** There are 10 study rooms (5 new!) for use at Main Library and 2 for use at Fairfield Woods Branch. Study rooms can be used for tutoring sessions, study sessions, and small group business meetings (limit of 4 persons per room); users must have a valid Connecticut library card registered with Fairfield Public Library. For more information or to make a study room reservation, call (203) 256-3160 (Main) or (203) 255-7308 (Branch).

**The Bruce S. Kershner Art Gallery at the Main Library has reopened!** The current exhibit is "Behind the Scenes: Art by the Curators," which will run through

November 27<sup>th</sup> during regular Library hours.

Fairfield Public Library continues to offer 24/7 access to its digital collection of books, music, magazines, movies and databases. Information services are available in person, by phone (203- 256-3160), by email at [eref@fplct.org](mailto:eref@fplct.org), and via text messaging (text *askfplct* to 833-232-4100).

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## **SOCIAL SERVICES**

The hardest part to getting help is reaching out. We are here to help. Please call us at 203-256-3170 Monday through Friday between 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM for more information or to schedule an appointment.

**Veterans and Service Members Student Loan Relief:** Veterans and service member with student loans may be eligible for special programs that forgive interest on loans, or even cancel the loan entirely. The Department of Education is working with government agencies to automatically apply these benefits to all eligible loans, but for more information, contact your lender.

### **\*\*and did you know that veterans may be reimbursed for travel to medical appointments?**

The VA is trying to get everyone to file their travel claims online via its new Beneficiary Travel Self Service System, or BTSS. However, travel claims may also be filed at kiosks located in VA medical centers, help desks, or patient services offices at many VA hospital or local clinics.

**Safe Return Network:** If a family member is prone to “wandering” or getting lost, consider registering for a new program developed to assist emergency personnel in locating them. To register go to [fpdct.com/safereturn](http://fpdct.com/safereturn); for more information, contact Officer Anthony Krushinsky at [akrushinsky@fairfieldct.org](mailto:akrushinsky@fairfieldct.org) or call 203-254-4800

## **Commission on disAbilities Seeking Volunteers**

Applications are currently being accepted for volunteers to join the newly established Fairfield Commission on disAbilities, a group intended to promote the inclusion and integration of differently abled people in community activities, services, and employment opportunities. Visit the Fairfield Commission on disAbilities page [here](#) to learn more. To apply, please visit the town of Fairfield’s Appointment Process page [here](#).

## **Rental & Utility Assistance**

Tenants and property owners may be eligible for up to \$10,000 towards overdue rent and \$1500 towards utility payments through UniteCT. Apply online at [www.bit.ly/UniteCT](http://www.bit.ly/UniteCT), or call 1-844-864-8328 for assistance.

**UniteCT** will now:

- Cover arrears accrued since March 13, 2020, rather than only those accrued in last 6 months
- Pay landlords for 100% of covered arrears, rather than only 85%
- Cover 3 full months of prospective rent
- Protect tenants from evictions for nonpayment of rent during the months covered by the prospective rent payments
- Continue to consider waiving the \$10,000 limit on rent assistance, on a case by case basis, for households with extenuating circumstances
- Rely where possible on information about an applicant's enrollment in other state programs to streamline the application process

Please Note: Anybody without a social security card or ITN number may call CIRI (Connecticut Institute for Immigrants and Refugees) for rental assistance at 203-336-0141.

**Additional Utility Assistance Through CEAP:** Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) is underway for 2021/2022. Alliance for Community Empowerment, Fairfield's local Community Action Agency (CAA), is now accepting early intake applications. Contact Alliance at 203 384-6904. You may explore their website at [www.AllianceCT.org](http://www.AllianceCT.org)

If you are unable to apply for energy assistance on your own, you may also apply with the help of the Department of Social Services beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>. Please call 203-256-3170 to make an appointment.

**Emergency Lien Assistance Program: Beginning October 1** Public Act 21-44 will establish an emergency lien assistance program within the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority's Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program. The program is designed to offer loans to homeowners facing foreclosure due to liens from municipal water or sewer charges, municipal tax debt, or association assessments and fines accrued at condos and similar types of housing.

**Eviction Help:** For those facing the possibility of eviction, legal services are available at 1-800-453-3320 (toll free). Also, if you do not know your rights, The Connecticut Fair Housing Center can help. Call 860-247-4400 or 888-247-4401, or explore their website at [www.ctfairhousing.org](http://www.ctfairhousing.org). Pay close attention to the tab

labelled “Evictions During Covid-19 Pandemic”. This provides updated information about Governor Lamont’s Executive Order relating to the Eviction Process and UniteCT Program.

**Foreclosure Prevention:** BTN (Building Neighborhoods Together) offers both Foreclosure Prevention Counseling, and also Foreclosure Prevention Clinics. For more information: [info@bntweb.org/class-descriptions](mailto:info@bntweb.org/class-descriptions) or call 203-290-4255. Additional information and resources may be found at the aforementioned CT Fair Housing Center: 860-247-4400 or 888-247-4401; [www.ctfairhousing.org](http://www.ctfairhousing.org)

**Mortgage Assistance:** Contact the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority’s Emergency Mortgage Assistance Program (EMAP) – 860-571-3500. Financial Assistance is also available through Operation Hope. Contact Brenda Lobdell at 203-292-5588, ext. 225.

**Important Change for SSI Recipients and Applicants:** The Social Security Administration (SSA) recently changed its rules about how pandemic-related financial assistance is considered, such that it will no longer count pandemic related financial assistance against an applicant’s eligibility or benefit amounts. The SSA is now reviewing applications, redeterminations, appeals, and other records going back to March 2020. To access or restore benefits, you do not have to wait to be contacted. Reach out to the Social Security Administration directly at 866-331-6399. If you need additional support or assistance, please call the Department of Social Services at 203-256-3170.

**Emergency Broadband Benefits:** For a monthly discount on broadband service up to \$50, eligible households can enroll through an approved provider or by visiting [getemergencybroadband.org](http://getemergencybroadband.org). Check website regularly for latest information: [www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit](http://www.fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit)

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**Pequot Library: We're Here, We Care** – Pequot Library is open for browsing and select programming. We are open for browsing! Visit Monday-Friday, 10AM-6PM, Saturday 10AM-4PM, and Sunday 12AM-4PM (weekend hours after Labor Day). Drop in during browsing hours to check out items from our circulating selection, see our latest exhibit in the Perkin Gallery, or view treasures from our Special Collections.



PEQUOT  
LIBRARY

Masks and physical distancing are requested from anyone in the Library.



Monday – Friday:

10:00 a.m.– 6:00 p.m.

Saturday:

September (after Labor Day) – June: 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

July – August: 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Sunday:

September (after Labor Day) – June: 12:00 – 4:00 p.m.

July – September (before Labor Day):

Outside of browsing hours, enjoy digital programs like story times, author talks, book clubs, and more! Get details on our [website](#) and social media: [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [YouTube](#). Sign up for Pequot Library's [Digital Digest eNewsletter](#) or contact our [Chief Librarian](#) for personalized book recommendations.

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## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

### **OPERATION HOPE**

#### **Behind in your rent or mortgage?**

Are you behind in your rent or mortgage? Operation Hope may be able to help.

Please contact Brenda at 203-292-5588 x225 or email her

at [blobdell@operationhopect.org](mailto:blobdell@operationhopect.org). All inquiries are confidential – they are there to help!

#### **Struggling to make ends meet?**

Reminder: Operation Hope's Food Pantry is here to serve all Fairfield residents. We are open at 636 Old Post Road Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 to 12:00 and Thursday from 4:00 to 6:00. Please let them help you with groceries and other basic necessities!

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### **FAIRFIELD CARES RECEIVES \$635K YOUTH DRUG PREVENTION GRANT**

The Fairfield CARES Community Coalition, the Local Prevention Council for the town of Fairfield, is pleased to announce that, in partnership with Fairfield Public Schools, it has received a five year federal [Drug Free Communities Grant](#) of \$625,000 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The grant, allocated at \$125,000 per year, will take effect on September 30, 2021, and will provide funding to prevent

and reduce youth alcohol and cannabis/marijuana use, the two most frequently used substances by youth in Fairfield. For more information on this grant, click [here](#).

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### **GET INVOLVED! TOWN BOARD AND COMMISSION VACANCIES**

You can also visit our Boards and Commissions page to learn more about roles and responsibilities: <https://fairfieldct.org/boards>

Interested in giving back to our community? Want to have a voice in shaping Fairfield? The Town relies on the hard work of citizen volunteers who are appointed to provide guidance and governance on various Boards and Commissions. The list of vacancies for Boards and Commissions are on the Town Website. Be sure to check back often as the list is updated as positions become available: <https://fairfieldct.org/vacancies>

To learn about the application process, please click here: <https://fairfieldct.org/appointmentprocess>

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### **EMERGENCY ALERTS | WHEN IT MATTERS MOST**

Get alerted about emergencies and other important community news from the Town of Fairfield, CT by signing up for the Fairfield Alert system. This system enables us to quickly provide you with critical information in a variety of situations, such as severe weather, unexpected road closures, missing persons, evacuations of buildings or neighborhoods and other emergency situations.

You will receive time-sensitive messages wherever you specify, such as your home, mobile or business phones, email address, text messages and more. You pick where, you pick how!

**If you were previously registered with us on the CodeRed system, you must sign-up again by following the instructions below, in order to continue receiving Emergency and Community alerts from the Town of Fairfield.**

[How to sign up? Click here.](#)

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### **PREVIOUS UPDATES:**

[October 1](#)  
[September 22](#)  
[September 10](#)  
[August 27](#)  
[August 13](#)  
[July 30](#)  
[July 16](#)

[Archives](#)

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203.256.3030

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