

Town of Fairfield News

1/21/2022 - 1.21 TOWN UPDATE



Dear Fairfielders,

It's hard to believe I'm heading into the start of my third year as First Selectwoman, and sadly, we all continue to deal with the impact of COVID. I know this has been a difficult time for all of our residents in many different ways, and I wanted to share with you as we begin 2022, that I think about our community every single day with compassion and kindness.

I hope you find this week's update informative and helpful.

CAPITAL WORKSHOP

Last Wednesday, I made a presentation before the Board of Finance during their annual Capital Workshop, where all identified capital projects in Town for consideration were discussed. Starting last year, I decided to take a different approach to the Capital Workshop than has been done in the past and shared *all* capital projects the Town is aware of in order to increase transparency related to the capital needs of our Town. I believe it is important for our Town's residents and Town boards to be aware of everything the Town has identified. You can view my [Capital Workshop Presentation](#) or watch the full meeting [here](#). I noted at the Capital Workshop that I would like to continue to improve this process by assembling a bipartisan working group with representation from Town bodies to take a deeper dive into the full list of our capital needs and assemble a five-year plan. I think this would be valuable to our Town boards and our residents to have a better understanding of what our Town's priorities are and what to expect going forward.

FILL PILE REMEDIATION

On Tuesday, January 18th, I invited the Town's Environmental Attorney, Mike Miller of Wiggin and Dana, to join me in presenting to the Board of Selectmen, Board of Finance, and RTM at a joint meeting regarding the ongoing fill pile remediation. I believe it's important to provide updates to our residents and Town boards. I know this entire scandal has been incredibly frustrating for our community and that our residents' trust in Town government was damaged. I have done my best over the last two years working to rebuild that trust, and I hope this presentation was helpful in that regard.

During the meeting, we presented the status of the Fill Pile itself, the related "Julian Fill" sites throughout Town, including Penfield Pavilion, and the historical contamination at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Attorney Miller clarified the complexities of this process, including negotiating with the regulatory agencies to reach a Consent Order, site investigations, and remediation. While this is a fluid and complicated process that won't be resolved quickly, we have made significant progress cleaning up many of the contaminated "Julian Fill" sites. **(Click on the image to view the presentation)**



Following the presentation, several elected officials focused their questions on the FEMA violation relating to the construction of Penfield Pavilion and why I would negotiate with FEMA to fix the building. Based on our ongoing conversations with FEMA, if the Town does not come into compliance, we would put our community at risk of losing future federal grants and funding. FEMA would also likely assess penalties, it could influence the Town's bond rating, and we have been told it could

impact FEMA insurance coverage for residents in flood zones.

Under my leadership, the Town will not ignore federal or state regulations, which is what happened under the former administration and is the reason we are facing these significant challenges. I will continue to follow the law and the regulatory agencies' directives as we address these issues.

If you weren't able to tune in on Tuesday, you can watch a recording of the meeting here on [FairTV](#).

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

On Thursday, January 13th, the [Charter Revision Commission](#) held a public comment session and discussed the Town budget process. The Commission received public comment at their meeting on Thursday, which can be found [here](#). The next meeting is on [January 27th](#) at 7:00 PM, where Fairfield's system of Town Governance will be discussed.

As a reminder, the Charter Revision Commission is a Board of Selectmen-appointed body tasked with reviewing and making recommendations to amend the [Town Charter](#) with input from the community. Fairfield's Town Charter was adopted in 1947 and is the foundation that guides principles for governance, defines how our Town Government operates and functions, and all essential procedures of our Town Government.

The Commission was charged with undertaking a thorough review of the current Charter and all aspects of the structure of Town Government, being mindful of adhering to, among others, principles of sustainability and that it is equitable for and inclusive of all our citizens, and further, shall draft any Charter amendments relative to the operation of the Town and effective representation of the people of this Town.

BUDGET

The School District presented their budget to the Board of Education last week with a 6.2% increase. The School side of the budget makes up approximately 64% of the Town's total budget. The 6.2% increase to the education budget equates to a \$12 million increase of their current \$188 million budget. You can [watch the meeting here](#). Education advocacy was the hallmark for why I became involved in public service in 1999. I place great importance on ensuring Fairfield's children receive the

best education while also being cognizant we have to keep the Town's spending under control.

Last year, the School District proposed a nearly \$10 million increase, which was the second-highest dollar increase in over a decade. For those residents who are not familiar with how the Town's budget process works, it begins with the school district presenting their budget to the Board of Education, who ultimately vote on a final education budget that is then sent to the First Selectperson.

As the Chief Elected official in Fairfield, I must then make decisions when incorporating both the town and education. Once my administration has a complete budget, I will present it to the Board of Selectman for a vote, and then it goes to the Board of Finance, and RTM for review and modifications. For example, during last year's budget process, I reduced the education increase request of nearly \$9.6 million, down to \$7.6 million before presenting my budget to the town boards. I have sent some follow-up questions to the BOE administration and are tuning in to the BOE budget meetings that are taking place this month.

In the last several weeks, I have spent the majority of my time meeting with the Town's department heads to go over their departmental budget proposals. I will continue that process over the next several weeks and then will spend time with my team to craft a final draft budget, which will be presented to the Board of Selectmen on February 23rd. I will include updates in my Newsletter throughout the budget process to keep you informed. If you're interested in watching the Board of Education budget meetings, you can follow that process [here](#). I will post the Town budget meetings when they begin at the end of February.

TEST KIT & MASK DISTRIBUTION

Last Sunday, we were back at it, distributing test kits to our residents. I want to acknowledge [CERT](#)'s continuous efforts in volunteering for test kit and mask distribution during this tumultuous time. They have proven to be a critical asset to our Town, not just limited to COVID-19 responses. I also want to recognize both our Fairfield Police Department and Fairfield Fire Department for all their hard work in the preparation efforts of distributing test kits and masks. While it was very cold, that did not stop our wonderful volunteers from stepping up for our community. It truly takes a village, and our CERT volunteers, along with our First Responders, always rise to the challenge to keep our Town and its residents safe. I especially want to recognize the Town's Emergency Management Director, Fire Chief Denis McCarthy, for his remarkable leadership and dedication to our community.



COVID RECOVERY FUND

Thanks to funding provided through the American Rescue Plan Act, the [COVID Recovery Fund](#) is now live. This fund will provide limited, one-time assistance to Fairfield residents who continue to be adversely impacted by the pandemic. I proposed [ARPA](#) funding be used for this purpose after seeing the COVID Relief Fund set up during the pandemic be such a needed resource and knowing there is still a great need for assistance.

For information on who is eligible and how to apply, please visit fairfieldct.org/covidrecoveryfund.

POLICE COMMISSION

Last week, January 12th, a number of Fairfield officers were recognized by the Fairfield Police Commission for their admirable service. Among those named were Sergeant Michael Stahl, Sergeant Richard Peck, and Detective Eric Fuller, who received the Distinguished Service Award for reestablishing the Citizen Police Academy Program (CPA). Their vision to reform the program began in 2020, and they have since created a profound mission, which places the residents at the heart



of the program and allows them to voice their concerns and needs. This inspirational change focuses on reform on a local level and shows the importance of community and police working together to create an environment in which we are proud to live. Chief Kalamaras

and his staff, along with Sgt. Stahl, Sgt. Peck, and Detective Fuller, have brought these ideas to fruition and established a 12 week Citizen Police Academy curriculum, which will allow 25 Fairfield residents the opportunity to foster relationships with officers and catch a glimpse of what it is like to be a law enforcement official. I am proud of Sgt. Stahl, Sgt. Peck, Detective Fuller, and the Fairfield Police Department for their continuous efforts in making a positive impact on our community. I hope you all can take the time to read more about the new and improved Citizen Police Academy [here](#). You can also read the full recognition of the officers [here](#).

POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Fairfield Police Department welcomes its newest Interns for the Spring 2022 Semester!

Evan Strauser - Housatonic Community College

Anna Ocheretyansky - University of New Haven

Samuel Angiolelli - Sacred Heart University

These students will take part in an educational and work experience, which will allow them the opportunity to personally evaluate the profession of law enforcement. They will have the opportunity to experience each aspect of our agency including but not limited to



patrol functions, traffic safety and enforcement, investigative functions, records and evidence management, communications functions, marine responsibilities, animal control, administrative functions, and more. You can learn more about the College Internship program at www.fpdct.com/intern.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Fire Chief Denis McCarthy has announced a new and improved website for the Fairfield Fire Department. This website will now include features of which will enable residents access to fire-related news, resources, permits, and communication with the department. Information on developing programs will also be featured on the website, as well as links to the department's social media. I encourage you to visit their [website](#) to stay in touch with Town-happenings.



GLASS RECYCLING

The Town of Fairfield Transfer Station is proud to announce that we have added a **GLASS ONLY** collection bin along with our mixed recycling bins. I hope residents will take advantage of this opportunity which will help save the Town money in recycling costs – but also will help our efforts to be a more environmentally conscious community. I want to thank DPW, and all the volunteers on the Sustainable Fairfield Task Force and Solid Waste & Recycling Commission for working to bring this new initiative forward.

We would like to encourage residents to separate their glass containers and drop them off at the **Transfer Station**. As always, recycling is at no charge to residents with a valid beach sticker. You can read more information [here](#).



ACCEPTABLE

Beverage Bottles
Juice Bottles
Condiment Bottles
Food Bottles

NOT ACCEPTABLE

Mirrors
Window Glass
Drinking Glasses
Decorative Glassware
Ceramic Cup & Plates
Ovenware
Clay Pots
Lightbulbs

As with all recyclables, no plastic bags, please. Unclear what's **IN** and what's **OUT** in your recycling bin? Ask the **RecycleCT Wizard** online at [RecycleCT](https://www.recyclect.org/)

COMMUNITY NEWS

CONSERVATION & GIRL SCOUT CADETTES TEAM UP

I want to acknowledge Girl Scout Cadettes Ayla Eyikan and Teagan Weber, Troop 30223, 8th grade students at Roger Ludlowe Middle School, who teamed up with the Town's Conservation Department to help dog walkers keep the trail in the Pine Creek Open Space free of pet waste. They worked together to install a Pet Waste Station at the entrance to the open space in the Sullivan Field/Kiwanis Field parking lot on Old Dam Road. The post, holding the sign and dispenser, is placed strategically next to a large trash can to add to the ease of proper disposal. The girls came up with the idea, presented it to the town's Conservation Department for approval, selected the location, researched and obtained all supplies, dug the whole and poured the

concrete, assembled and installed the Pet Waste Station. Congratulations on a job well done! I hope our residents appreciate this new addition to the trail.



KRISTYN GOLIER DAY

On Wednesday, January 12th, I had the honor of joining Kristyn Golier's husband, Chris, in surprising Kristyn on her Birthday by proclaiming January 12th as Kristyn Golier Day! Kristyn has been a vital asset to our community since the start of the pandemic, with her innovative thinking. Throughout 2020 and 2021, Kristyn took the initiative of volunteering to help our local businesses, restaurants, and bars whose operations were struggling due to the pandemic. Her efforts included creating a Facebook page, [Fairfield County Local Curbside, Takeout & Delivery Restaurants](#), which now has over 12,300 members. On this page, members can use it as a resource to find and share any information regarding local restaurants, a positive way to bring our community together. Kristyn has been praised as the "restaurant guardian angel," and I



could not think of a more deserving person to receive this honor. You can read the full proclamation [here](#).

FAIRFIELD RESTAURANTS

Speaking of our wonderful restaurants, 13 of our Town's restaurants were featured in [Connecticut Magazine's Best Restaurant Awards for 2022](#). I am very proud of all who dedicate themselves to their businesses and continue to provide the best possible dining experiences for our residents. Below is a list of the restaurants recognized for their delicious food.

- [Aurora's](#): best Mediterranean or Greek food
- [Barcelona Wine Bar](#): best Spanish or Portuguese food in CT & Fairfield County
- [Catch a Healthy Habit](#): best vegetarian or vegan food in Fairfield County
- [Ginkgo Sichuan Cuisine](#): state runner-up for best Chinese food
- [Layla's](#): best Middle Eastern Food
- [Little Pub](#): state runner-up for best family dining, best family dining in Fairfield County, state runner-up for beer selection, best beer selection in Fairfield County, best traditional American food in Fairfield County, & best lunch in Fairfield County
- [Mama Chow](#): best Vietnamese Restaurant in CT & Fairfield County
- [Mecha Noodle Bar](#): expert pick
- [Pho Nha Trang](#): expert pick
- [Shu Restaurant](#): expert pick
- [Tequila Revolucion](#): best Mexican food
- [The Tasty Yolk](#): best breakfast in Fairfield County



IN HONOR OF GEORGE CHATZOPOULOS

George “Georgie” Chatzopoulos, of Chip's Family Restaurants, passed away after a year-long battle with brain cancer; he was only 55. George was an immigrant who worked his way up to become an incredibly talented businessman. He treated his employees with the utmost kindness, mentored those who needed a jump start in business, and most notably, touched the hearts of anyone who had the pleasure to know him.

George started his original restaurant in Orange, which was so successful, he later expanded to Fairfield, Wethersfield, Southbury, and Southington. George was a well-known philanthropist, often holding pancake fundraisers for numerous organizations in his restaurants. He strongly believed in giving back to the communities where he operated his businesses, which created an even larger family atmosphere in his restaurants. I want to thank the Fairfield Police and Fire Departments for granting a request from George before he passed, by draping bunting at Chip's in honor of this very generous and kind man.

George's legacy will live on through the countless people he impacted.





UNITED WAY COVID RELIEF GRANT

On Monday, January 10th, United Way of Coastal Fairfield County generously awarded the Town of Fairfield a grant to help residents who were financially impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. United Way also donated a supply of KN-95 masks, which are available at the [Bigelow Center for Senior Activities](#) for those unable to acquire them. This grant covers emergency assistance for rent, utilities, and essential bills to increase stability in households. United Way's continued support for our community is greatly appreciated, and on behalf of the Town, I want to say thank you. Any sort of help goes a long way, and the additional donation of the masks aids families who cannot afford the additional costs. I want to personally thank CEO, Jeff Kimball, for presenting this crucial grant and dedicating his time to support Fairfield families in need. I also would like to thank United Way board member, Anne McCrory, who is also a long-time Fairfield resident whose active community involvement continues to help Fairfield residents.



GOOD NEWS SUNDAY

Luke and Sofia Palisi are two students determined to deliver positive and informative news to the residents of Fairfield at just 12 and 10 years old. In March of last year, I had the pleasure of being interviewed by these talented students in honor of [Women's History Month](#). Each Sunday, I enjoy reading their updates, as well as interacting with their weekly puzzles and games, a great way to keep the mind active. This week's print newsletter opened up with focusing on New Year's Resolutions. Tips on practicing patience and bettering your listening skills were highlighted, which I believe is a wonderful skill to hone at such a young age. It is inspirational Luke and Sofia are influencing other children around them, along with residents who read their newsletter each week, in such a positive manner. If you want to put a smile on your face on a relaxing Sunday morning, you can visit their website [here](#). You can also sit back and enjoy your cup of coffee listening to their [Podcast](#). I know they would also be over the moon if you shared any of your stories related to positivity within our community at goodnewssundayfairfield@gmail.com. Sign up for weekly updates [here](#).



I hope you have an enjoyable weekend.

Brenda L. Kupchick
Fairfield First Selectwoman

COVID-19 UPDATE

Important steps recommended by health professionals include:

- Get vaccinated if you are not or get a booster if you are eligible
- Check yourself for COVID-like symptoms each day and stay home and get tested if you have any
- If you are in isolation or quarantine stay away from others and limit your activity to only what is essential
- Wear a mask when indoors in public, especially if you are unvaccinated
- Limit activity involving groups especially where others vaccination status is unknown
- Wash your hands frequently

For vaccination, there are [numerous sites](#) available in Fairfield and nearby as well as [daily walk-in clinics](#) in many towns.

There are [10 COVID testing](#) sites in Fairfield under contract to offer no-cost testing to CT residents.

Fairfield's Positivity Rate: [22.7%](#)

State of CT Town Rating: [Red](#)

Fairfield County Hospitalizations: [425](#)

Vaccine First Dose: [81.8%](#)

The current requirement is for all unvaccinated to wear masks indoors and the Town supports the CDC recommendation that all individuals wear masks indoors due to the “High” transmission classification of Fairfield County.

FAIRFIELD COVID RESOURCE PAGE

JANUARY UPDATES

SNOWFLAKE DANCE

Join our Parks & Recreation team at their Snowflake Dance at Penfield Pavilion on **Saturday, January 29th**! We invite girls & boys along with their father, mother, grandparent, aunt, uncle, older sibling, or ANY special person in their life for a fun night out! DJ, dancing, strolling magician, professional photographer, light refreshments & more! Tickets available NOW [here](#).



PARK & RECREATION



Registration IS OPEN! Please visit www.fairfieldrecreation.com for more information.

RENEW YOUR 2022 BEACH/TRANSFER STATION STICKER

PURCHASE YOUR 2022 GOLF ID

BIGELOW CENTER FOR SENIOR ACTIVITIES

Fairfield senior center's mission is to provide services and programs for older adults that promote well being, support independence, and encourage involvement in community life. To become more involved with local activities and stay informed on news surrounding the Senior Center, you can view their [Newsletter](#).



UTILITY ALERTS

Are you signed up with Aquarion to receive Alerts when there are water problems in your area, like a water main break? You must sign up to be notified online at the link below or call Customer Service to sign up at: (800)-732-9678

AQUARION

POLLINATOR PATHWAY NEWSLETTER

The Pollinator Pathway Project was established in Wilton, CT, by a group of volunteers who are involved in Town Conservation Organizations. They have since expanded in over 200 towns throughout the East Coast, which includes our Town of Fairfield. Learn more about their work towards creating a better habitat for our wildlife in their [Newsletter](#) to see what all the *buzz* is about. You can also catch up on some of the local work the organization is doing [here](#).



FRAUD ALERT | NEW TOOL TO HELP HOMEOWNERS

With the launch of the Town of Fairfield's Fraud Alert, property owners can now sign up to be notified of new transactions regarding their property. With Fraud Alert, you can sign up to receive alerts whenever a document, such as a mortgage, is recorded under your name. Documents can be viewed online at: [Town of Fairfield, CT - SearchIQS](#). Please remember that there may be other property owners in Town that have the same name.

Town Clerk Betsy Browne shared that this new tool provided by IQS is an easy way for homeowners to have peace of mind, especially with the increase in scams recently. You can sign up now at: [Fraud Alert - SearchIQS](#)

TOWN SERVICES

SOCIAL SERVICES

The hardest part of 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.

For more additional information and resources, social services offers a comprehensive newsletter with various programs addressing career development, service members, and housing [here](#).

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The Fairfield Public Main Library building is open Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9 AM – 5 PM and Tuesday & Thursday 9 AM – 7 PM. Woods Branch Library is open Monday & Wednesday 9 AM – 7 PM and Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 9 AM – 5 PM.



Both Main and Woods are open Saturdays and Sundays from 1 PM – 5 PM. **Beginning January 24th, we will be expanding hours: both Main Library and Woods Branch will be open until 8 PM, Monday – Thursday.**

Meeting rooms at both libraries will reopen for rental beginning in February 2022. Online reservations are now being accepted via the Library's website.

Current mask policy: Patrons over age 2 MUST wear masks in all programs, during meeting room use, and when entering the Children's Room. Social distancing is advised.

Scott C. Jarzombek, Town Librarian, is currently hosting “community office hours” once per month, where patrons are invited to drop in, share observations, and have their voices heard. Location will alternate between Main Library and Fairfield Woods Branch. The next session will be Tuesday, February 15th, from 10 AM – 1 PM at Woods Branch.

The Library has announced this year's One Book One Town selection! **The House in the Cerulean Sea by TJ Klune will be our shared community read**, culminating in a visit by the author on March 1st. Copies of the book can be purchased at the Fairfield University Bookstore or borrowed from either Library.

Free tax assistance will once again be offered at Main Library on Tuesdays from January 25 – April 12, 2022. IRS-certified counselors will meet with residents between 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM on a first-come, first-served basis; no appointment is necessary. This service is intended for low- and middle-income households and those over age 60, although all individuals will be assisted.

Adults, teens, and children are encouraged to participate in the **Library's Winter Reading Challenge**, going on now. Explore new genres, discover new authors, and be entered to win prizes while you enjoy reading. Check the Library's website for information on how to get started.

The Library continues to offer a mix of in-person, and virtual programming at both locations for children, teens and adults. Please view our online calendar of events on our website, [Fairfield Public Library | You Belong Here!](#), to see the offerings and reserve your spot!

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

Pequot Library: We're Here, We Care – We are open for browsing! Visit Monday-Friday, 10 AM – 6 PM, Saturday 10 AM – 4 PM, and Sunday Noon – 4 PM. 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

Now on view: Magic, Mayhem, & Maturity: The Growth of Youth Fantasy Literature

Drawing on materials from the Children's Historical Collection and the modern circulating collection, this exhibition examines the emergence and evolution of youth fantasy literature. Oftentimes, stories from this genre use magic as a metaphor for the turbulent transition from childhood to adulthood. Spanning fairy tales to 19th century works like *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Wizard of Oz* to more modern stories like *Harry Potter*, *Children of Blood and Bone* and *The Gilded Ones*, this exhibition further explores how these stories have evolved to tackle this transition in a more frank manner and, significantly, to embrace all voices.

For more programming, visit [Upcoming Events – Pequot Library](#).

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.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Behind in your rent or mortgage?

Operation Hope may be able to
help!

Please contact Brenda at 203-292-5588 ext. 225 or
email her at blobdell@operationhopect.org

All inquiries are confidential



OPERATION HOPE

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 AM to 12:00 PM and Thursday from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Please let them help you with groceries and other basic necessities!

PREVIOUS UPDATES:

[January 7](#)

[2021 Year in Review](#)

[December 17](#)

[December 3](#)

[November 19](#)

[November 5](#)

[Archives](#)

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[Archives](#)

