

Minutes  
Town of Farmington, CT  
Racial Equality Taskforce  
Town Hall - Council Chambers/Online Webinar  
October 7, 2020  
7:00 P.M.

**Attendees**

Joseph Capodiferro  
Edward Giannaros  
Kay Higgins  
Sarah Smith  
Yahmina Penn  
Nieka Thompson  
Jeremy McLaurin  
Chris Cloud  
Jessica Harrison  
Tanner Musznski  
Bill Beckert

**Staff**

Nancy Parent  
Kory Vincent  
Anna Savastano

**A. Call to Order.**

Nancy Parent called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

**B. Public Comment.**

None.

**C. A Presentation on Various Town Services.**

Kathy Blonski (Town Manager), Kathryn Krajewski (Assistant Town Manager) and Rose Ponte (Economic Development Director) gave a presentation to the Taskforce. **(See Attachments 1 & 2)** Their presentations introduced themselves and their positions. Each of the presenters expressed that they were excited to work with the taskforce.

After the presentation the committee asked various questions. Sarah Smith asked Rose Ponte how many Black/Latino owned businesses were in Farmington. Rose shared that she had identified six Black owned businesses but did not have the statistics for Latino owned businesses. Chris Cloud suggested the Town utilize HEDCO as a resource for small businesses. Rose shared that the Town does have a connection with HEDCO and agreed that they were a great resource.

**D. Reading of the Minutes**

- 1) **To approve the attached September 9, 2020 minutes.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (McLaurin/Giannaros) it was unanimously VOTED: to approve the September 9, 2020 minutes.

2) **To approve the attached September 23, 2020 minutes.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (Cloud/Higgins) it was unanimously VOTED: to approve the September 23, 2020 minutes.

E. **Update and discussion on goals and timeline.**

Nancy Parent and Kory Vincent gave a presentation on the statistics on Juvenile cases from the Police Department that were requested by the Committee. **(See Attachment 3)**

The group had general discussion and follow up questions on the presentation. The majority of the discussion was in regard to the Westfarms Mall Juvenile Cases. Black juveniles made up 59% of the cases from 2017-2020 at Westfarms Mall, and residents only accounted for 3% of the total cases at Westfarms Mall. Kory explained that in almost every case, the police only respond to shop owner complaints, and the police make every attempt to send the case to the Juvenile Review Board instead of a Court Summons. The group discussed the possibility of the Town sponsoring a Racial Bias training for shop owners at Westfarms Mall as a possible solution. The taskforce also discussed the fact that the Juvenile Cases at Farmington High School had a disproportional number of Black students in relation to the total number of Black students that attended Farmington High. Black students made up to 26% (approximately 10 out of 39) of the juvenile cases from 2017-2020. Although the group did not know the percent of black students at the High School, this number is disproportional to the number of students.

The Superintendent will be presenting at the next meeting on October 21, 2020. The following meeting date has not been set, but State Legislators will be giving a presentation at that meeting.

F. **Public Comment.**

None.

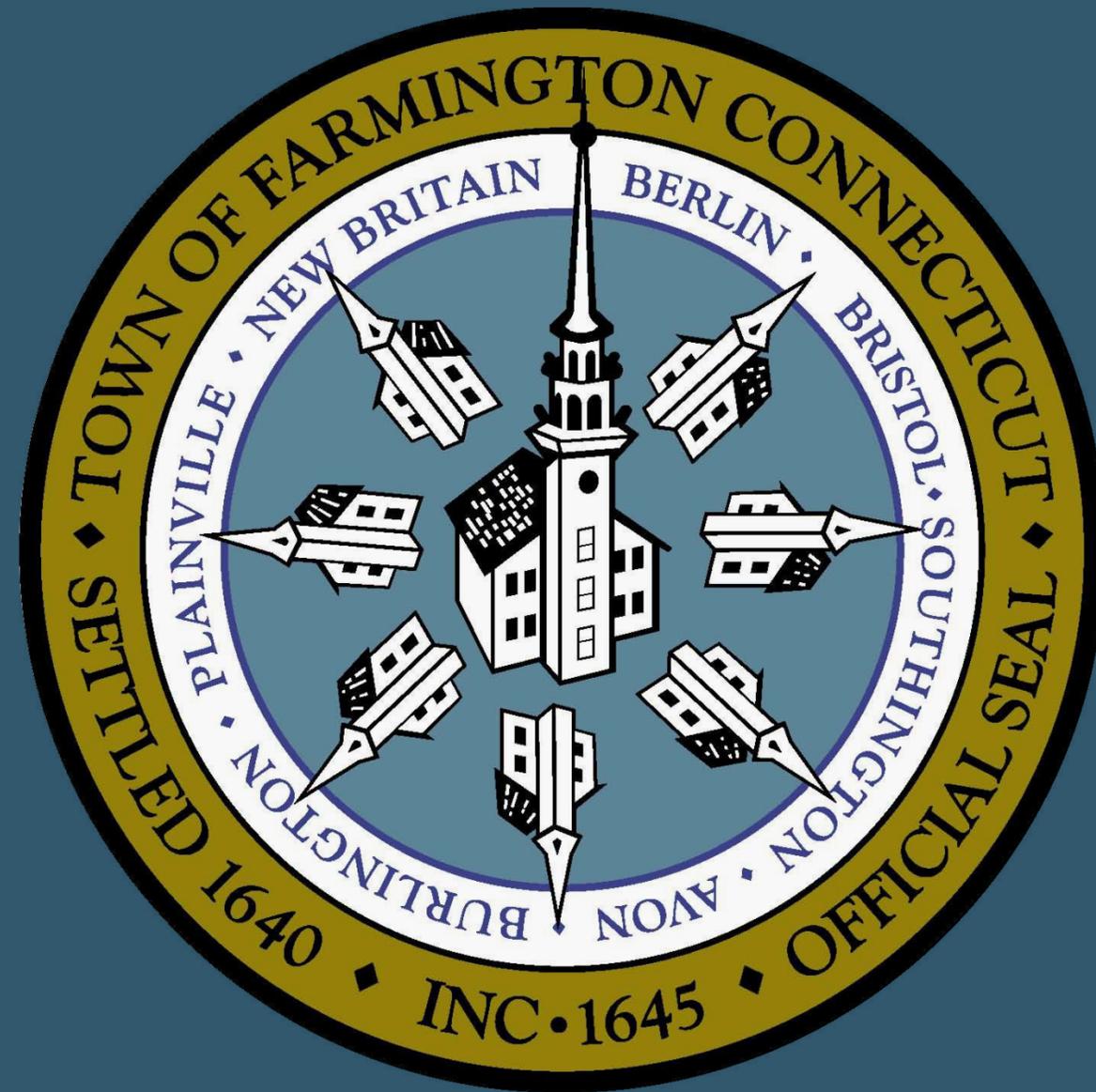
G. **Adjournment.**

Upon a motion made and seconded (McLaurin/Giannaros) the meeting adjourned at 8:44pm.

Respectfully Submitted,



Anna Savastano  
Management Analyst  
Clerk



# Racial Equality Taskforce Presentation

*Kathy Blonski*  
**Town Manager**



- Chief Executive Officer
- Implement Town Council Policies and Programs
- Appoint and Supervise Personnel
- Develop and Execute the Annual Operating and Capital Budget
- Oversee Municipal Operations

# Town of Farmington Departments

## *Appointed By the Town Manager*



- Director of Fire and Rescue
- Assistant Town Managers
- Economic Development
- Community & Recreational Services
  - Social Services
  - Elderly Services
  - Youth Services
  - Recreation & Golf Course
- Finance & Administration
  - Tax Collector
  - Town Assessor
  - Finance Department
- Police Department
- Public Works & Development Services
  - Water Pollution Control
  - Town Planner
  - Building Department
  - Fire Marshal
  - Engineering
  - Highway & Grounds

Town Council- Financial Board- Town of Farmington  
& Policy Decisions (Municipal Operations)

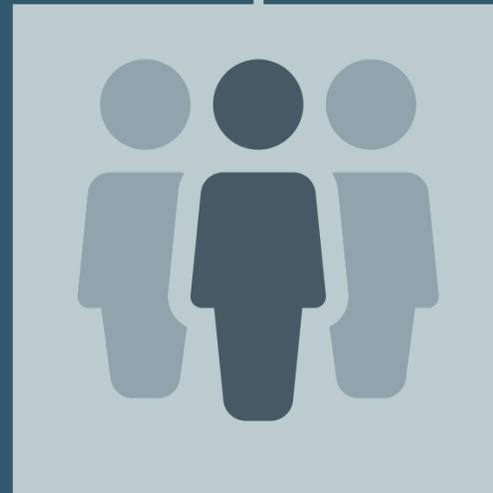


Appoints

Appoints



Kathy Blonski, Town Manager



Boards & Commissions



Board of Education- Education Budget & Policy  
Decisions (Farmington Public Schools)



Appoints



Kathy Greider, Superintendent

# Town of Farmington Strategic Plan

## TOWN OF FARMINGTON STRATEGIC PLAN

Adopted July 2005  
Amended January 2006  
Adopted January 2008  
Amended November 2008  
Adopted March 2010  
Amended November 2012  
Adopted February 2014  
Adopted December 2014  
Adopted February 2016  
Adopted May 2018  
Adopted January 2020  
Amended June 2020



- Guide for the decisions and actions the Town Council makes throughout their term
- Prioritizes initiatives and funding priorities
- Living document- intended to be modified, amended and updated to reflect the needs and interests of our community

*Goal 24a- To establish an Ad Hoc Committee to develop a Town Action Plan around racism in our society, social injustice, the reputation of police departments nationwide and how it relates to Farmington.*

# Town of Farmington Highlights FY 19/20:

- **Steady Grand List Growth- This year our Grand List Grew by \$30,593,752**
- **Maintained Aaa Moody's Bond Rating**
- **Completed an Upgrade to our Water Pollution Control Plant**
- **Continued Growth in the Bioscience Corridor**
- **Economic Development- New Businesses & Expansion of Existing Businesses**
- **Lowest Tax Rate in the Region**

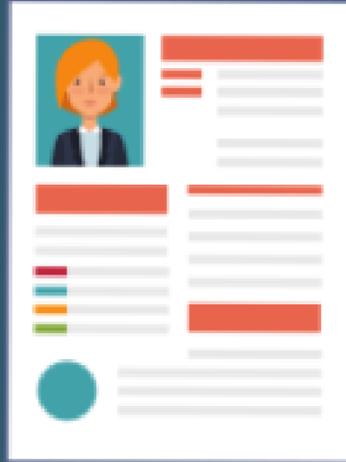
*Kat Krajewski*  
**Assistant Town Manager**



*Assistant Town Manager Responsibilities:*

- Human Resources / Manage the Town of Farmington recruitment process
- Research & Management Analysis
- Budget & Capital Planning
- Grant Writing & Administration
- Oversee Town Communication Initiatives
- Staff Liaison for the Farmington High School Building Project

# TOWN OF FARMINGTON RECRUITMENT PROCESS



**STEP 1: APPLICATIONS**



**STEP 2: TESTING**



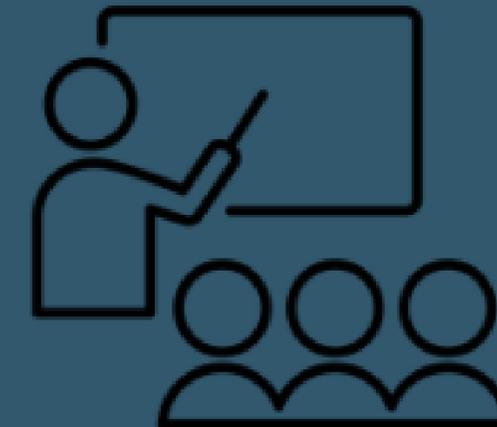
**STEP 3: ORAL  
PANEL/INTERVIEWS**



**STEP 4: CONDITIONAL  
OFFER/BACKGROUND CHECK**

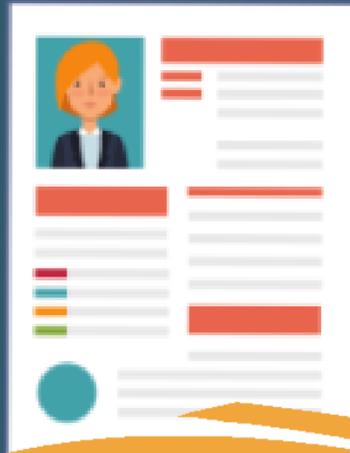


**STEP 5: APPOINTMENT**



**STEP 6: EMPLOYEE ON-  
BOARDING**

# TOWN OF FARMINGTON RECRUITMENT PROCESS



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**STEP 5: APPOINTMENT**



**STEP 6: EMPLOYEE ON-  
BOARDING**

# IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR RECRUITMENT PROCESS

- **ADVERTISING:** Where are we posting our jobs to encourage diversity in our workforce?
- **TRAINING:** Unconscious Bias Training for all employees

# *Rose Ponte* Economic Development Director

Cuban American | Mother of 4 | Mimi of 9  
Collaborator, Connector, Colleague

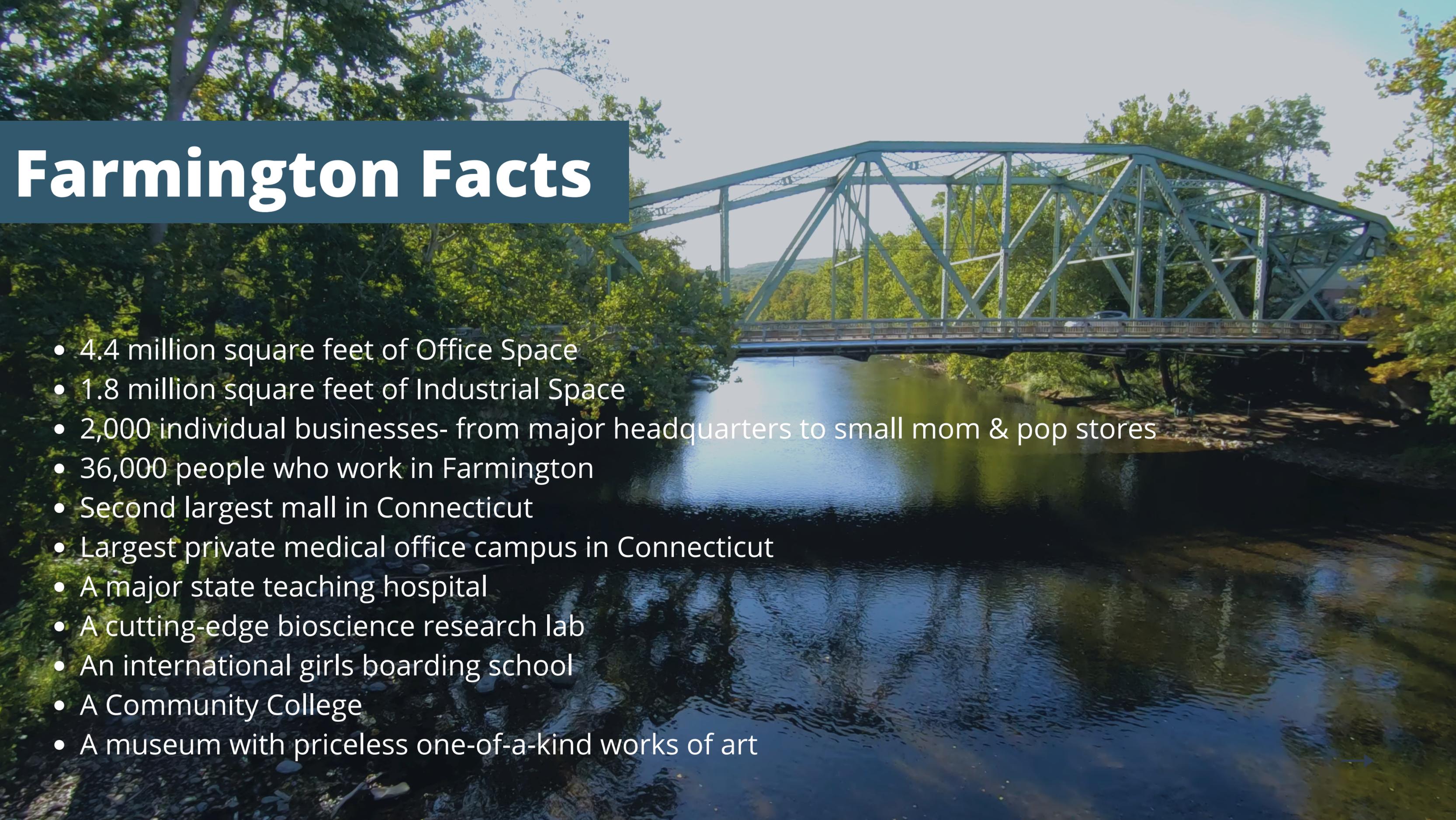




*Welcome to the*  
**Town of Farmington**

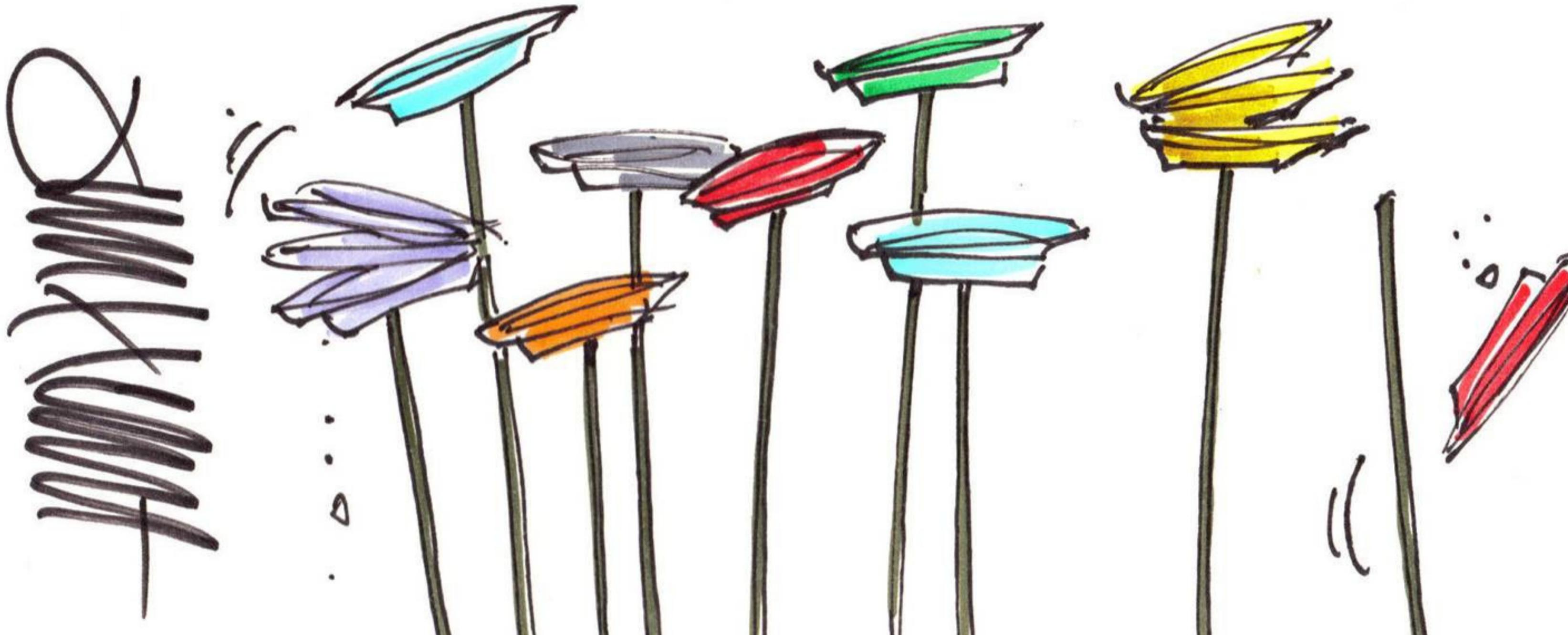
The Town of Farmington is a historic and progressive town with an engaged citizenry. The Town's development team is committed to promoting the growth of the tax base through programs and processes designed to encourage business retention, expansion and attraction while maintaining the character of the community.

# Farmington Facts



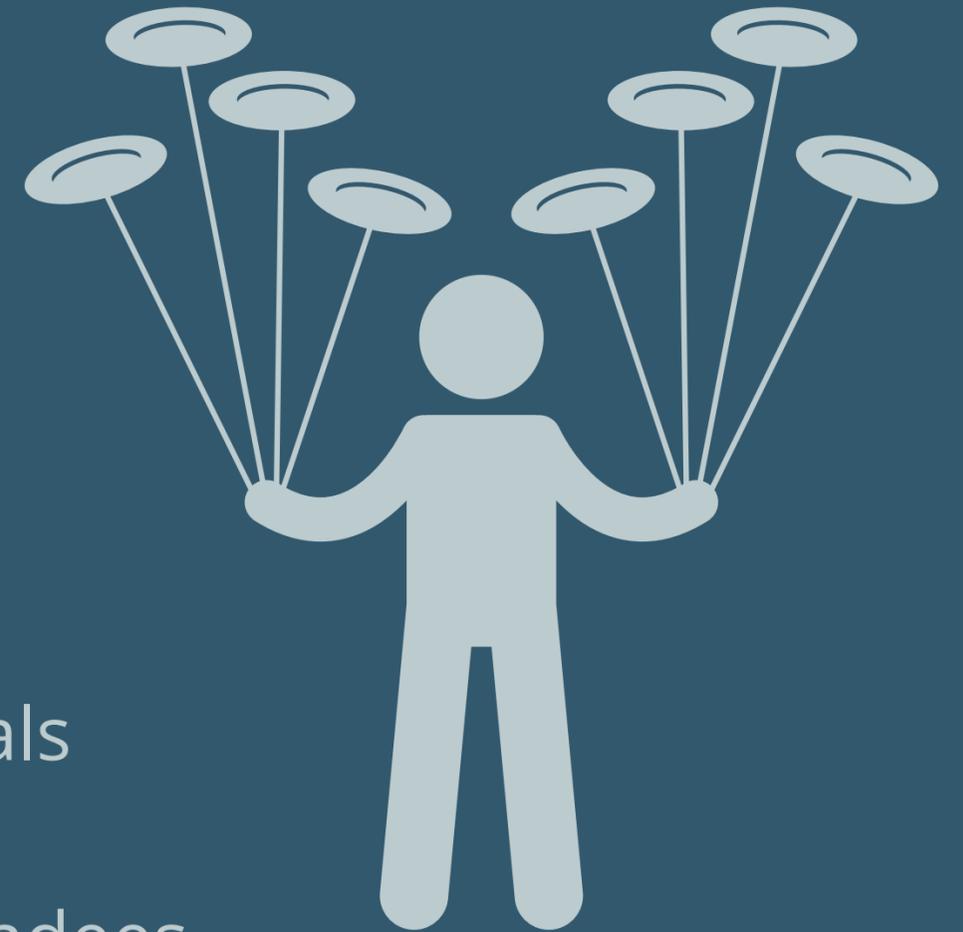
- 4.4 million square feet of Office Space
- 1.8 million square feet of Industrial Space
- 2,000 individual businesses- from major headquarters to small mom & pop stores
- 36,000 people who work in Farmington
- Second largest mall in Connecticut
- Largest private medical office campus in Connecticut
- A major state teaching hospital
- A cutting-edge bioscience research lab
- An international girls boarding school
- A Community College
- A museum with priceless one-of-a-kind works of art

# The Economic Development Role



# \* \* My Spinning Plates \* \*

- Cultivating an ecosystem for businesses to thrive
- Managing a business visitation program
- Managing a trusted communication channel
- Managing Beautify Farmington Program
- Managing a Farmington Marketing and Promotional Materials
- Hosting Small Business Resource Series- 2X Year
- Hosting Quarterly Business Networking Breakfast- 200 Attendees
- Conducting Data and Demographic Analysis
- Match businesses to resources , residents to businesses



# Diversity & Inclusion

*Where are we, where should we be and how do we get there ?*

- Identified Farmington black owned business owners using shopblackct.com and other resources
- Contacted Chambers of Commerce and sponsored a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program that will help business leaders and organizations understand the unique challenges they face in cultivating a truly inclusive culture and climate at all levels. Presented by Andrea Hawkins, Founding Partner of Leading Culture Solutions . This program will be a 4- part series
- Contacted the CT SBDC to inquire about small business program aimed at assisting minority owned business and the University of Hartford Women's Business Center to collaborate and developed a program to assist minority -owned business owners
- Attend & Learn D&I webinars so I can best understand how to cultivate a more diverse business community

## Attachment 2

Good Evening. I would like to thank the Racial Equality Taskforce for inviting me to join a collaborative effort to develop initiatives and measurable goals for Town services to address racial inequality. I would also like to thank all the taskforce members for volunteering their time to serve on this taskforce and lead these discussions to benefit the community at large.

It's been my pleasure to serve as Town Manager in Farmington for the last 20 years; during this time, aside from managing the day-to day municipal issues, I've handled my share of emergencies, storms, and budget challenges, but this year, I've addressed issues that many of us could've never anticipated. This year has truly been a challenge, since there is no play book for a global pandemic.

As the Town Manager, I am the Chief Executive Officer for the Town of Farmington. I am responsible for the implementation of Town Council policies and program, the appointment and supervision of personnel, the development and execution of the annual operating and capital budget, and the direction of municipal operations. Here is a list of the departments I oversee...

I believe this organizational chart is helpful in illustrating the roles and responsibilities of your elected officials, and appointed boards and commissions (including this taskforce). As you can see, the Town Council is the financial board and directs policy decisions for municipal operations. As the Town Manager, I am appointed by Town Council to implement their policies and manage the daily operations of the Town. Likewise, the Board of Education directs policy decisions for Farmington Public Schools, and the Superintendent of Schools implements their policies and manages the daily operations of the school system. The dotted line illustrates the relationship between the Town Council and the Board of Education. The Town Council funds the Board of Education's overall budget but has no say on how that money is spent.

The Town Council prioritizes their initiatives and funding priorities in the Town of Farmington Strategic Plan, which is adopted every two years. The Strategic Plan is a living document, intended to be modified, amended, and updated to reflect

the needs and interests of our community. The Town Budget is developed based on the goals and incentives outlined in the Strategic Plan. Recently, the Strategic Plan was amended to include the work of this taskforce as a Town Manager Goal for 2020-2022. I believe that adding this taskforce as a goal is just the starting point.

Now I would like to share with you some Farmington highlights from Fiscal Year 2019/2020:

Our grand list had its seventh consecutive year of steady growth, this year the grand list grew by \$30,593,752 and the Town maintained its Triple A Moody's bond rating, the highest rating a municipality can achieve. The rating agencies stress that this is the result of a stable governing body, solid financial policies, a strong tax base, and our commitment to consistently funding our reserve and pension accounts. Farmington's robust grand list, high bond rating, and healthy business environment combine for one of the lowest tax rates in the Hartford region.

The Public Works Department completed a comprehensive upgrade to our Water Pollution Control Plant. Our plant is a regional one that

services Farmington, Avon, Canton and Burlington. The Highway Division continued to undertake extensive road project throughout the year.

Over the years, our economic development efforts have been very successful. Farmington has a vibrant business community with over 2,000 businesses and 36,000 people commuting to Farmington every day.

This year, in the UCONN Health neighborhood, the 25,000 square foot CT Surgical Center was completed, and a new 50,000 square foot medical office center is near completion. This particular area of Town has become a hub for cutting edge bioscience research and development.

This year, along with several manufacturing expansions, Thomaston Savings Bank and Collinsville Savings Bank both constructed new branches, the Wood-n-Tap completed their renovations on a beautiful location along the Farmington River, Toro Loco, a new Spanish restaurant opened in the former Wood-n-Tap location, Anthology of Farmington completed their new complex complete with independent living, assisted living and memory care services, Five

Corners Bistro opened in the completely renovated former Stonewell restaurant, located across from the newly built Five Corners retail plaza.

I think you will all agree that Farmington is a great place to live, work, play and prosper. But I also believe that we have a responsibility to identify areas of improvement and address racial inequality in our community. One immediate recommendation I would like to make, would be to incorporate a zero-tolerance policy for racism as a desired outcome in the strategic plan. The desired outcomes are essentially the guiding principles and policies of the Town as a whole, and this would solidify the Town's commitment to denounce racism in Farmington.

In tonight's presentations, you will hear from Kat, Assistant Town Manager, who will discuss our hiring and recruitment process, and Rose, our Economic Development Director. I believe that we have built a solid foundation, but as always, there is room for improvement. This taskforce is a catalyst for change and I believe the discussions, community engagement, and action items from

this committee will result in a better, equitable, inclusive Farmington that we can all be proud of.

# JUVENILE REFERRALS

Racial Equality Task Force

October 2020

# JUVENILE CASES

- Handled differently than adult cases
- Parent / Guardian Present
- Notice of Rights / Juvenile Review Board Application
- Juveniles cannot be detained for more than 6 hours
- Emphasis on Community Based Programs

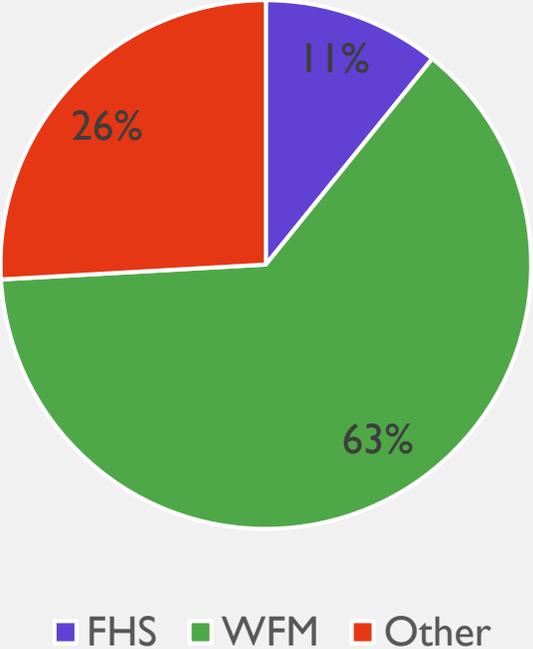
# FARMINGTON CASES INVOLVING JUVENILES 2017 – 2020

Total cases from Westfarms Mall, Farmington High School, and Other locations in town (Residences, business, etc.) during the previous 3 years:

**164**

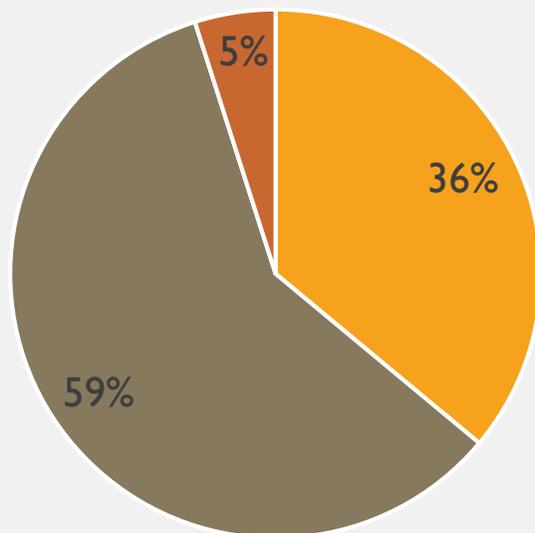
Incidents occurred in Farmington, involving youths from throughout the state  
Not necessarily Farmington residents

Location



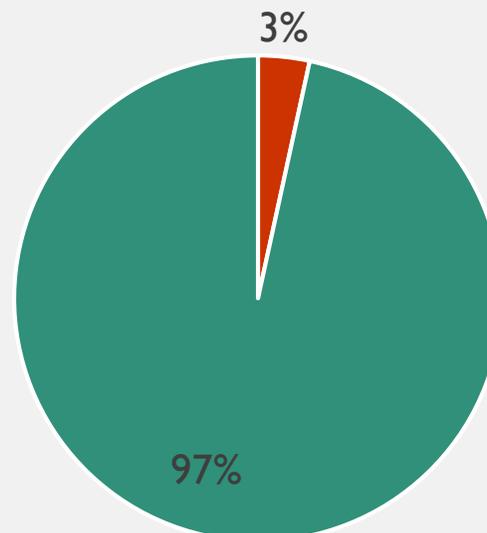
# WESTFARMS MALL JUVENILE CASES 2017 - 2020

Race of Westfarms Mall Cases



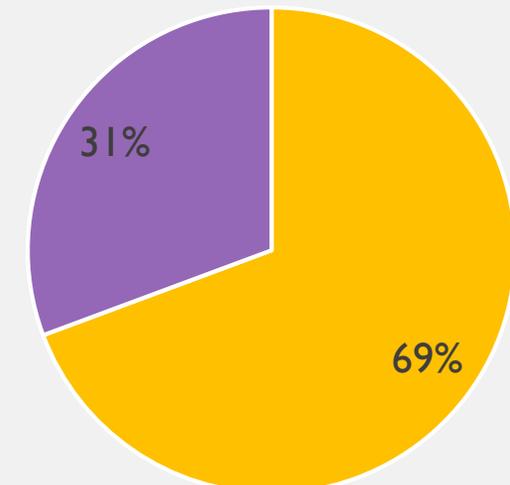
White Black Asian

Residency of Westfarms Mall Cases



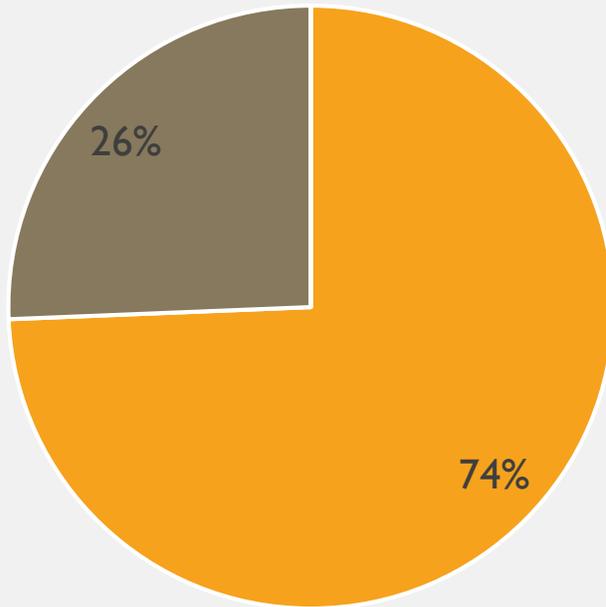
Farmington Resident Non-Resident

Outcome of Westfarms Mall Cases



JRB SUMMONS

# FARMINGTON HIGH SCHOOL JUVENILE CASES 2017 - 2020



■ White ■ Black

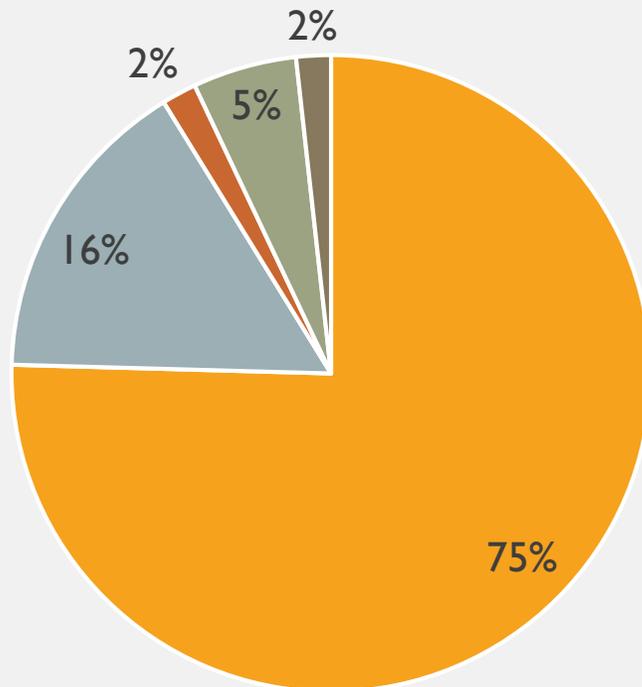
TOTAL CASES: 39

- VAPING CASES: 24
- OTHER CASES: 15
  
- JRB REFERRALS: 28
- SUMMONSES: 11
  - Ten cases that resulted in summonses had been evaluated for JRB and were found to be ineligible and one case declined the JRB option.

# JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD

- Non-judicial diversion program
- Supportive learning and growth environment for youth and family
- Process includes: Intake, hearing, follow up and service delivery
  - Use of clinical measures
  - Emphasis on prevention and intervention
  - Supportive treatment and service delivery
  - Assistance w/ advocacy, referrals and ongoing support

# JUVENILE REVIEW BOARD CASES



• TOTAL CASES: 48

White Hispanic Asian Multiracial Black