

Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, December 15, 2022 at 8:00 A.M.
Zoom Meeting/Simsbury Community Television Live Stream

Mr. Askham called the Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Subcommittee to order at 8:00 A.M. via Zoom Meeting/Simsbury Community Television Live Stream.

Present were:

James Baldis, Chief, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; **Michael Berry**, Emergency Management Director; **LT. Matt Christian**, Police; **Maria Capriola**, Town Manager; **Kristen Formanek**, Director of Community & Social Services; **Jennifer Kertanis**, Farmington Valley Health District; **Wendy Mackstutis**, First Selectman; **Mark Massaro**, Community Relations & Economic Development Specialist, Eversource; **Chris Peterson**, Selectman; **Tom Roy**, Director of Public Works; **Karin Stewart**, Executive Director, Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association; **Neil Sullivan**, Director of Personnel, Simsbury Schools; **Patrick Tourville**, Fire Marshall, and **Gary Wilcox**, President, Simsbury Fire District.

Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Audience

Mr. Askham introduced Ms. Stahl for public audience who spoke about the safety of the crosswalk at Griswold. She mentioned she has got a petition together and presented their concerns at the last Board Of Selectman meeting, and they will be meeting with Chief Boulter who has been helpful. Mr. Askham mentioned it is a State road and they will advocate as best they can.

Housekeeping Items:

1) Approval of Minutes

The Minutes from the September 22, 2022 were accepted as presented.

2) 2023 Regular Meeting Schedule

Mr. Askham mentioned that the first meeting will be held on March 16 and not March 17, and the remainder of the quarterly meetings will be held on June 15, September 21, and December 14, with flexibility to add special meetings as needed.

MOTION: Mr. Peterson made a motion, effective December 15, 2022, to accept the regular meeting schedule as presented. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

Updates:

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Kertanis spoke about the rise in respiratory illnesses and encouraged the public to continue to get their flu shots and COVID vaccines to help prevent the need for hospitalization. She provided a list of places where the vaccines can be received. She added mask wearing and hand

washing is also great preventative measures. She spoke about their Fall Prevention meeting in partnership with the Police, the Fire Department, The Senior Center, Social Services, and the VNA. The goal is to support people aging at home and promoting safety.

2) Town Manager's Office

Ms. Appleby reported a collaboration is in progress to update their EMS plan, which is required every five years. She also reminded to residents to start thinking about Winter storm preparedness and she has been working with Mr. Berry to prepare an announcement and send it out to everyone.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry said that the town does not have any more COVID test kits and provided information on the Government website where people can order them once a month. He confirmed the local EMS plan is complete on his end and he is just waiting on a few agency approvals. Once that is complete, they will submit it to the State for approval. He said they had a training session with Eversource and praised their communication during storms in general. He mentioned they are continuing to keep people informed via social media and WSIM 103.5. He asked if any groups would like to have Emergency Management present, they would be more than happy to come out and join them. Mr. Berry said they are working on putting together an Emergency Preparedness Disaster drill, since they haven't had one in a few years and will be reaching out to various Departments and groups to put something collaborative together. Cyber Security was mentioned and will also be worked on to ensure all the Town employees are trained to recognize a cyber attack.

4) Police

LT. Christian reported on a couple of messages from the Chief's office. He mentioned the Police Department and the Local Traffic Authority group are working on an assessment of safety measures at the crosswalks in town and are currently collecting data and engaging in conversations. He mentioned they are holding their departments annual Stuff A Cruiser event and will be accepting donations of new, unwrapped toys at the Tractor Supply on Hopmeadow St. He said the toys go to support Simsbury Social Services, and the Greater Hartford Salvation Army. LT. Christian spoke about the process and next steps with the sidewalk improvement project and said the timeframe will be months to have discussions on financing as working with the State take time. Mr. Askham spoke about the possibility of preemptively putting a placeholder in for infrastructure improvements assuming the Town will have to contribute something. LT. Christian added that the more information they receive the more complete their assessment will be.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart reported that they had their annual meeting which was well attended by volunteers, employees and The Town Manager and said the PowerPoint reviewed will be published on their website. She mentioned their third ambulance is out for remounting, so they are working with two vehicles at the moment which is not a concern as they have made back up arrangements if need be. When it returns it should be like a brand-new vehicle. Ms. Stewart conclude with numbers and statistics for the period.

6) Fire

Mr. Wilcox spoke about the Simsbury Celebrates event and said it went very well and is looking forward to a great Holiday Season. Mr. Tourville spoke about fire safety and battery storage. He mentioned they are looking into buying bags for the public to store them in. Chief Baldis spoke about ensuring fire hydrants are shoveled so they can assess them if they need to.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan added an update from the last meeting on the locked vestibule project and mentioned that this past Summer Terrafill was updated. Once they finish the Latimer Lane project, they will have all 7 complete. He added he has been very impressed with the construction management team and their attention to safety at Latimer Lane. He added the most challenging timeframe for parking will be Spring and it may change some of the traffic patterns for drop off and pick up. They will be working with the Police and will keep everyone updated. He added they have lots of COVID test kits if anyone needs them. Mr. Askham added that using the school buses will help cut down on traffic.

8) Public Works and Engineering

Mr. Roy reported they have had two plowable events this year and they are facing staffing challenges being down 2-3 drivers. He asked residents to not park on the road while they are plowing and asked that kids don't play near the road. He added not to plow or snow blow into the road as it causes issue. He congratulated Kurt Denalsky on his promotion to senior crew leader.

9) Social Services

Ms. Formanek spoke about the recourses and additional support they are looking into in relation to the Fall Prevention project. She said they are busy working on a Holiday program and are also experiencing staffing challenges. She added that if anyone needs assistance with their energy bill expenses they should reach out to her, and the food pantry is robust at the moment and the two rooms they have rented are overflowing. She said they had extra food to give out this year.

10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz was not present, but her report was read by Mr. Askham and included the Fall Prevention project, a recommendation to wear masks in public, the availability of a flu vaccine at the clinic, and a shout out to Social Services on their "Adopt A Family" Christmas Tree program.

11) Main Street Partnership

Ms. Neilson was not present, but her report was read by Mr. Askham and included the Simsbury Celebrates Planning Committee which noted record number of attendees and she thanked the Fire Department, Police, Ambulance, Public Works, Parks and Rec and everyone involved for an amazing torchlight parade and all the work that went into coordinating this event. He said DPW and Main Street Partnership are continuing to work on the way finding signage for their downtown to help make the visitor experience safer and better to navigate.

12) Eversource

Mr. Massaro reiterated about the energy assistance program considering the increasing energy costs. He added that with everything going on around the world there is a decrease in supply of natural gas supply getting to our area. He encouraged customers to go online to EnergiseCT and see how they can save on the supply costs. He said there may also be rebates online that the public should investigate and to call the Eversource customer care group for assistance. He spoke about an emergency preparedness process and how they would communicate with their customers.

13) Other

Ms. Mackstutis spoke about the swearing-in ceremony at the Police Department and congratulated Tracy Dunn who was promoted to Sergeant.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Lynott
Commission Clerk