

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY – BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES – FEBRUARY 14, 2022
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CALL TO ORDER

The Special Meeting was called to order at 5:09 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. Present were: First Selectman Wendy Mackstutis; Deputy First Selectman Amber Abbuhl; Board members Heather Goetz, Sean Askham, Eric Wellman, and Chris Peterson (by phone). Others in attendance included Town Manager Maria E. Capriola; Deputy Town Manager Melissa Appleby, Karin Stewart Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association and other interested parties.

PRESENTATION

Ambulance/Medical Calls for Service Presentation

Ms. Stewart said the Volunteer Ambulance Association was established in 1957. They have been a 501c-3 organization for 65 years. She said in 1995 they started billing for services to support operating costs. She then went through their history from 1974 to 2019, which includes 60 years of continuing service in 2017. In 2013 the Town was designated as a heart safe community thanks to the Ambulance Association.

She said they are made up of volunteers and paid staff including medical technicians and paramedic EMT's. The 911 dispatcher is highly trained and connect with people to let them know help is on the way. Police officers are also first responders.

Ms. Stewart said they added a third ambulance in 2016, which always ensures a back-up is always available. They also have two intercept vehicles. The 911 calls are the highest during weekdays and the ambulance is staffed 24 hrs. /7 days a week/365 days a year.

Ms. Stewart said in 2000 their new facility was dedicated, providing much needed room. They rely on contributions and can solicit donations through their annual campaign. Billing rates are set by the State. If the patient only has Medicare the fee isn't all collectable. If Medicaid is the secondary insurance, nothing is billable to the State.

Ms. Stewart gave descriptions of EMT's, who are required to perform 150 hrs. of training and achieve State certification and Paramedics are required to perform 1800 hrs. of training and can do much more than EMT's. SVAA works closely with the Police Department, Public Works and the Fire Department.

The cost of a new ambulance is approximately \$150,000 – 300,000 and a refurbished one is \$150,000 plus the cost of equipment and supplies.

Ms. Stewart went through the breakdown of calls in 2021 and there was discussion on calls and costs. There were 2533 medical dispatch calls. Non-transport responses that can't be billed were 719. There were 387 calls where other agencies came to Simsbury and 237 calls where Simsbury went to other towns. There has been an increase in call volume over the last 12 years.

Mr. Wellman spoke about the response time analysis data from 2021 and there was discussion on what level of service is necessary and how they compare to other places like Simsbury. He went through 2021 response time from dispatch to arrival. He also went through mutual aid times. He said 25% of the calls were under 5.3 minutes; 50% of the calls were under 8.4 minutes; and 75% were under 12 minutes.

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There was some discussion on non-medical calls and calls that take over 20 minutes. These calls need to be looked at more closely. Also, mutual aid calls need to be looked at more closely. They need to see if a second ambulance is sustainable.

Mr. Askham thanked Ms. Stewart for allowing Ms. Capriola to attend the Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance meetings twice a year. Mr. Askham said there needs to be an increase in reporting, maybe quarterly, to the Board of Selectmen with their support data.

Ms. Stewart said she would answer any questions from the Board and would like to show the Board how they work as they are not a normal business.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathi Radocchio
Clerk