



Town of Simsbury

933 HOPMEADOW STREET

SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT 06070

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Public Safety Sub-Committee

February 18, 2021

8:00AM

SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Audience

- Email written comments to ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov by 12:00 PM on Wednesday, February 17, 2021 to be read into the record

Approval of Minutes

- 1) January 21, 2021 Minutes

Updates

- 1) Farmington Valley Health District
- 2) Town Manager's Office
- 3) Emergency Management
- 4) Police
- 5) Ambulance
- 6) Fire
- 7) Board of Education
- 8) Public Works
- 9) Social Services
- 10) VNA
- 11) Main Street Partnership
- 12) Other

Adjournment

Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 8:00 A.M.
Zoom Meeting/Simsbury Community Television Live Stream

Mr. Askham called the Special Meeting of the Public Safety Subcommittee to order at 8:04 A.M. via Zoom Meeting/Simsbury Community Television Live Stream.

Mr. Askham left the meeting at 8:38 A.M. and Ms. Capriola led the meeting.

Present were: Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager; James Baldis, Chief, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; Michael Berry, Emergency Management Director, Simsbury Fire District; Nicholas Boulter, Chief of Police; Maria Capriola, Town Manager; Chris Davis, Deputy Chief of Police; Kristen Formanek, Director of Community & Social Services; Mike Long, Police Commissioner; Mark Massaro, Community Relations & Economic Development Specialist, Eversource; Sarah Nielsen, Simsbury Mainstreet Partnership; Chris Peterson, Board of Selectmen; Tom Roy, Director of Public Works; Nancy Scheetz, Visiting Nurses Association; Karin Stewart, Executive Director, Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association; Neil Sullivan, Director of Personnel, Simsbury Schools; Gary Wilcox, President, Simsbury Fire District

Pledge of Allegiance
All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Audience
There was no public audience.

Approval of Minutes
1) December 17, 2020 Minutes
The minutes were approved as presented.

Updates
1) *Farmington Valley Health District*
No one present with an update.

2) *Town Manager's Office*
Ms. Capriola provided virus statistics, noting the Town is currently in Red Status and a jump was reported in the numbers in and around the Holidays. For the two-week period ending January 5, Simsbury has 29.2 cases per 100,000 people, a positivity rate of 4.6% among those tested, with 99 cases during that period. In general, the workforce remains healthy. During the month of December, 3 staff members were quarantined due to contact with a person with the virus and 3 staff member positive cases. She reminded people that response time for non-emergency situations may be delayed and asked residents and patrons for continued patience and understanding. There were a small number of staff members eligible for the vaccine during Phase 1A and she anticipates further employees being eligible for Phase 1B. She is awaiting further guidelines on eligibility.

Town Hall and the Library continue to welcome walk-in visitors with limited hours. Town Hall is open Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and the Library is open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturdays, midday. Curb-side pick-up and technology appointments are still available on the days they are not open to visitors. In reference to the limited hours, she noted the facilities team is a very small staff and the need to adhere to vigorous cleaning protocols and sector rules. She confirmed the building capacity is being maintained at around 50% or less, and staff are doing a combination of working on site and remotely, which has assisted in keeping continuity of the services. In relation to open facilities, some of the restriction on the ice rink has been lifted and smaller groups are now being allowed.

Mr. Askham added that the budget season has kicked off. The BOF is thoughtfully looking at the challenge of how capital is addressed in this town. He mentioned he doesn't see any constraints in relation to normal capital items for public safety, but larger capital items will need to be prioritized and bonded appropriately.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry reported they are vaccinating up to 120 people a day at vaccine clinic. He expressed that they are looking for a suitable site to expand up to 5 times the size and welcomed any recommendations and suggestions for a site in town, or in the immediate area. Their goal is to ramp up the ability to give vaccines and will be working with health workers as well as volunteers to administrate these. Mercy Management has been talking weekly with the Governor's office to get updates on the vaccine, and 1B has allowed 1.2M people to now be eligible. The State is receiving about 44K doses a week which needs to be divided amongst all. The 2020 review of the emergency operations plan was complete and is now being sent on-line to all agencies with a digital signature page to be included.

The fire district conducted interviews with 4 excellent candidates for the Assistant Emergency Manager position.

Lastly, he noted weekly incident action plans are continuing to be issued with not many changes.

4) Police

Chief Boulter reported they continue to have a small number of employees who are directly or indirectly affected by COVID. One officer was hospitalized for a week but is recovering now. Many officers took advantage of the vaccine which was made available and he thanked all the parties involved in making this easy for them. He recommended people who are in management to be aware that the second dose has the potential for short term side effects so they should plan staff and coverage in advance if possible.

Mr. Askham added that there is a new Police Commission Chairwoman, Ms. Jenna Caulfield. He mentioned the pre-budget planning meetings are in progress and concluded that the police department are doing an outstanding job and are safe, but as their needs continue to change, evolve and increase they should thoughtfully look at staffing.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart reported they have seen an increase in COVID related calls. Their overall call volume is lower than usual however some days are high, and she is considering adding the

second ambulance back onto the schedule to cover for the heavy call days. They are well staffed, and staff and volunteers have been able to get their vaccination. PPE gloves are in short supply and have an extremely high mark up, but they continue to maintain a sufficient supply which is available to anyone that needs it.

6) Fire

Chief Baldis reported that COVID has not hit the volunteer force. There have been some precautionary quarantines, but their response and recourses has not been affected. They had a staff member with a positive test

They have been hosting the vaccine clinics and thanked all the parties involved for their coordination and efforts. Most of the firefighters have received their first vaccine and many are scheduled for their second one. One home fire this week was reported this week. The occupant was safe, however there was a pet loss. He thanked all parties involved for helping with the situation. The COVID situation has delayed the delivery of components for their quint until possibly July. He added it doesn't affect service because they still have the other apparatus. Tracks for the UTV were received which will help ensure its operational year-round especially in heavy snow. An order was placed for a new pumper to be delivered in 2022. In relation to the tobacco barns, he warned the public to be very cautious and avoid them if possible as they are not stable may collapse.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan reported they are experiencing the uptick in both cases and associated quarantines in the weeks since the Holidays. They have been able to continue to staff the schools and commended the substitute teachers and teachers who pivot and work from home when needed. He warned if people are not careful about social distancing the quarantining can have a real impact. He mentioned there may be a potential for interruption in service with the busses due to lack of bus staff. They are looking at the consolidation of some routes and it's an area that's feeling some strain at the moment. He commended the district for following the distribution protocols and guidelines for getting the vaccine. Currently school employees are scheduled for March and includes most staff.

8) Public Works

Mr. Roy reported there are a few employees out on quarantine due to exposures, and no positive cases to date. He mentioned they are being recognized throughout New England for the snow plowing COVID-related procedure they developed for quarantined staff with no symptoms; many other communities are adopting similar procedures. .

9) Social Services

Ms. Formanek reported staff has been working very hard, continuing with food programs. The last two Cheese Days have been some of their largest ones. Last week 134 individuals were served, 42 bags of additional food were provided to families with children, 96 boxes were

provided from the Salvation Army and they delivered to 27 homebound individuals. They utilized 6 volunteers for driving and 6 with the food distribution. The walk-up distribution model is working well. She reminded people to get in touch with her office if they needed assistance with their heating costs. They will help them with the application process for the Energy Assistance program and can assist those who need to make payments for their Eversource bill.

She noted seniors are provided daily zoom activities to help them with engagement and added the Wednesday drive-through hot lunch distribution is averaging close to 60 seniors weekly. Some of the most vulnerable people are starting to get the vaccine and the senior center is helping the seniors in town to sign up. She noted three ways to sign up for the vaccine: 1) through your provider, however people should wait until their provider reaches out to them 2) for anyone +75 they can sign up through the state VAMS system or 3) there is a number to call to sign up. All this information will be shared on social media and on the website and she is encouraged people to sign up for the vaccine as they become eligible. She concluded with reminding everyone to follow safe protocols in relation to wearing masks even when vaccinated. The hand-sewn masks are still being offered.

10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz noted they are looking for volunteers both medical and non-medical to help with the vaccine administration. She reported that 98% of her staff have been vaccinated. She also mentioned that in some businesses and health care providers as low as 50% of eligible people are choosing to get vaccinated. She offered her resources and services to teach and educate the risks and information on the vaccine. She concurred with Ms. Formanek that social distancing and wearing masks should continue to be worn even after vaccinated. She noted an uptick in business and said a lot of people in the community have COVID. She does see a light at the end of the tunnel.

11) Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen offered N95 masks to Ms. Scheetz and team as she does the vaccine clinics. KN95 are being offered to the business community, town staff and essential workers that need them. She noted a decrease in business interruptions due to COVID and surmised it may be due to businesses introducing pods. Some businesses will have temporarily planned closures due to COVID related financial reasons, most of those are restaurants. Grocery businesses have been invited by the state to start the registering process and they are helping them navigate the VANS site. She concluded with asking to be kept in the loop as it relates to private sites being offered as a vaccine site as they can provide information on what will and will not work.

12) Other

Mr. Massaro, reminded everyone that the Eversource energy efficiency group is offering businesses or providers a program to offset the costs of refrigeration to store the vaccine. He noted an increase in COVID scam calls and asked people to call Eversource and follow up with the police if they receive a call like this.

Chief Baldis added that they are reviewing a short video on COVID scams and said he will look into seeing if the information Mr. Massaro provided can be included, if not already.

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Mr. Wilcox concluded that next week he will be announcing a new Assistant Emergency Manager. He commended Mr. Berry for his hard work and is looking forward to providing him an assistant. He thanked Mr. Kowalski for doing a great job in this capacity in the past and positioning Mr. Berry to take over the role.

The group will meet again on Thursday, February 18, at 8:00 A.M.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Lynott
Commission Clerk