

Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 17, 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:

Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager; **James Baldis**, Chief, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; **Michael Berry**, Emergency Management Director; **Nicholas Boulter**, Chief of Police; **Jenna Caulfield**, Police Commissioner Chair; **Kristen Formanek**, Director of Community & Social Services; **Mike Long**, Police Commissioner; **Wendy Mackstutis**, First Selectman; **Melissa Marquis**, Farmington Valley Health District; **Mark Massaro**, Community Relations & Economic Development Specialist, Eversource; **Tom Roy**, Director of Public Works; **Nancy Scheetz**, CEO Visiting Nurses Association; **Karin Stewart**, Executive Director, Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association; **Neil Sullivan**, Director of Personnel, Simsbury Schools; **Patrick Tourville**, Fire Marshall, and **Jim Traficante**, Assistant Emergency Management Director

Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of December 16, 2021 were amended to correct the spelling of the Animal Control Officer's last name.

The minutes of February 17, 2022 were amended to correct the spelling of the Police Commission Chair's last name. In addition, a correction was made to Mr. Long's remarks to state that the ratio of police officers per 1,000 residents is 1.57.

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Marquis provided a Covid-19 update stating they are currently monitoring the new variant that's forthcoming, and they are working with the school districts to hold school-age vaccination clinics on March 23, 2022. She said this is the last scheduled clinic and a good chance for children who didn't previously get vaccinated or boosted to sign up. She mentioned the staff are going through some after action exercises and will be identifying areas of strength and improvements and will be identifying best practices. She thanked the sub-committee for the help and input throughout the process and welcomed any feedback.

2) Town Manager's Office

Ms. Appleby provided the Town Manager's report stating they are currently at yellow status which is a decrease from previous reports. She said 81.55% of residents are fully vaccinated and 51.73% have received their booster doses and said information on testing and vaccinations sites are posted on their website. Ms. Askham provided a summary on the budget saying that the Board of Selectman has passed the Town portion of the operating and capital budget which now

goes to the Board of Finance for approval. He mentioned police staffing of 1 civilian and 2 certified officers were part of the budget, which would result in 3 certified officers on patrol. He said a police service dog, and its equipment, was also part of the request to further interact with the community.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry reported that there were more ice storms than snow storms this year and they have been working with Eversource to address issues that arise from them. He mentioned Eversource will be doing extensive tree trimming this year and he will share their plans once received. Mr. Berry said they are working with the State Representatives on submitting the Emergency Management Performance Grant applications for the last couple of years. He said they are also working on their Emergency Operations Plan review, and they will be concentrating on the sheltering plan this Spring. He said that on March 26, 2022 there will be a hockey tournament in Hartford for the Battle of the Badges and both Simsbury and New Brittan will be playing.

4) Police

Chief Boulter recapped the budget request for the officers and said they are working through a lot of applications to backfill Mark Rudewicz's position. He mentioned that the patrol staff are handling any animal control calls and there is no interruption to service. He added the nuisance wildlife aspect is not being covered and that the survey for checking residences for dog licenses was complete before Mr. Rudewicz's left so will be due again when the new person comes on board.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart reported numbers on call volume and response time saying it dropped off a lot in February. She said this will result in a decrease in what they will bill out. She mentioned the response times have been consistent with an average of 7 minutes and 23 seconds in December, 7 minutes and 5 seconds in January, and a little over 8 minutes in February. She said there was additional mandatory staging time added for several calls in February which increased the number. She reported a decrease in Covid calls and the second ambulance is still running.

6) Fire

Mr. Tourville reported that public gathering permits are coming in and the new process they defined is working well. He said the construction projects are coming to completion and the last apartment building in the Ridge at Talcott Mountain complex will be going online this week with people moving in. He said they will be working with the local gas stations to place legal notices they are experiencing a rise in people stockpiling gasoline and other issues due to the increase in gas prices.

Chief Baldis reported on the delivery of a new pumper and a new quint, which is a combination of a ladder and a pumper. The quint replaces two pieces of equipment. He reported on a fire district budget workshop planned for Wednesday, March 23rd and is anticipating no notable increases. For public gathering he reported the Duck Race at Tootin Hill School will return and cautioned about public safety. He reported on the electrical fire incident and the importance of checking smoke detectors and concluded with a safety message on burning brush advising a permit through the fire department is required for all open fires.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan reported that about 10%- 15% of the student population are choosing to wear masks and a little higher for the staff. He mentioned they have an overflow of Covid self-tests and asked if anyone requires them as they have an expiration date of this Summer. He mentioned the design plans for Latimer Lane are continuing, and they will be focusing on school security at their next meeting. He said the school budget has been presented to the Board of Finance and their emphasis is on the mental health needs of the students with new positions added for school psychologists and social workers which is an important strategic initiative for the school system.

8) Public Works and Engineering

Mr. Roy reported on the Winter recap with the increased number of ice storms which is a challenge for their staff. He said ice becomes more dangerous more quickly and they used a lot more salt which is expensive. He added Simsbury has longer plow route's than neighboring towns saying that their drivers are responsible for 13 miles of road as opposed to 10 miles for similar municipalities and commended staff for doing an excellent work keeping the roads in good condition. He said he is working closely with Eversource on the tree trimming efforts and will share the mapping on the public works page and will ensure people have notice of any work prior to completion. He mentioned they have a list of licensed and qualified nuisance wildlife vendors on their site also and said they have an abundance of N95 masks if anyone needs them. Mr. Roy reported they have increased the number of roadside reflectors around town, added reflectors to all the guide rails, and have been doing minor drainage improvements in an effort to make the roadways safer.

9) Social Services

Ms. Formanek report on their budget saying they are focusing on mental health and have requested a new social worker to work with families and youth. This has been approved by the Board of Selectman and Town Managers office and now needs to be approved and moved forward by the Board of Finance. She said the seniors are back in the Senior Center for the Tuesday café meal and Wednesday hot lunch. For social services, they are wrapping up with the energy assistance and they will be doing some Spring activities for the children in the community among other things. She mentioned they also have the N95 masks and test kits available if anyone needs them.

10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz reported post hospitalization for Covid has decreased and she mentioned they are required to have a stockpile of PPE gear in storage and would welcome taking some of the extra ones available.

11) Main Street Partnership

No report - Cell Phone Service Improvements Update was tabled until the next meeting

12) Eversource

Mr. Massaro reported on the 4-year cycle for tree trimming and said he will be working with Mr. Roy's group to ensure public safety. He reported that Emergency Response Management meetings will be taking place in April, and that the dispatchers have been using the municipal hub. He added that he can provide training for anyone who would like to log in and take a look.

He urged people to contact the customer care group for energy assistance and forgiveness programs which are still available.

13) Other

Mr. Long and Ms. Caulfield thanked the First Selectman and anyone who supported the increase in personnel to the police departments budget.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Lynott
Commission Clerk