

Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, June 15, 2023 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; **Matt Christian**, Police Department; **Chris Davis**, Deputy Chief of Police; **Kristen Formanek**, Director of Community & Social Services; **Tom Fitzgerald**, Acting Deputy Town Manager; **Jennifer Kertanis**, Farmington Valley Health District; **Lee Erdmann**, Town Manager; **Mike Long**, Police Commissioner; **Wendy Mackstutis**, First Selectman; **Mark Massaro**, Community Relations & Economic Development Specialist, Eversource; **Chris Peterson**, Selectman; **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 **Gary Wilcox**, President, Simsbury Fire District.

Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Housekeeping Items:

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Wilcox provided feedback that CVS should be changed to SVA. Chief Baldis provided a grammatical update.

MOTION: Mr. Peterson made a motion, effective June 15, 2023, to accept the minutes from March 16, 2023, with minor administrative adjustments. Mr. Askham seconded the motion. All were in favor and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Askham welcomed the new Town Manager, Lee Erdmann, to his official first Public Safety Sub Committee meeting.

Updates:

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Kertanis thanks those involved in a recent regional Anthrax tabletop exercise in Bloomfield. She also made the public aware that they have completed their Health Assessment and have moved into their Health Improvement phase and asked the public or town official to the health district if they had an interest or expertise in the areas of mental health, healthy eating, active living, or issues associated with aging healthy and safely. She mentioned they are continuing to collaborate and partner with other groups in relation to the Fall Prevention and Home Safety program.

2) Town Manager's Office

Mr. Erdmann provided an update on the Main Street Partnership stating they are close to a final MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) draft which will be circulated to the Board of Selectmen and then to the partnership. He added they have a second draft of a MOU with the Ambulance Service which will be sent to the town Attorney once agreed on.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry reported a change of leadership at the Emergency Management office in Hartford. He mentioned Mr. Turley has taken another position and they have not yet appointed a Region 3 coordinator. He also added that the Secretary in Hartford has retired. Mr. Berry reported the weather has been mild and the river has not overflowed this Spring. He added that he attended a Weather Conference last week and they stated that the storms expected this Summer will be harder hitting but of a shorter duration. He mentioned the smoke from the wildfires and cautioned anyone sensitive to port air quality to plan accordingly. He mentioned they attended a Hurricane Conference, and the experts are finding it to predict this year's storms and asked the public to check their preparedness kits and ensure they have sufficient supplies to last 72 hours. Mr. Berry said that the Town of Simsbury ended its state of emergency for COVID 19 soon after the governor reported the end of the executive powers dealing with the pandemic on May 11th. He said they are now back to normal conditions, but the public should continue to follow proper hygienic procedures and should look for updates from the Farmington Valley Health District. He spoke about the Anthrax tabletop exercise they attended last week with the other groups and said it was nice to attend in person. He mentioned that the radio station WSIM continues to pump out music 24 hours a day and is ready to provide important information to the town in time of need. He said the Emergency Operations plan for the town continues to be reviewed and updated and new annexes required by the State include an Extreme Heat Plan, an Extreme Cold Plan, Cyber Security, Flooding Plan, and Mental Health Awareness. He added they will be asking all personnel to review their sections in the Sheltering Plan and send in any updates as needed.

4) Police

LT. Christian had nothing to report. Commissioner Long reported they are fully staffed for the first time in several years and public safety remains a high priority and they will be back to traffic control as it used to be.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart reported they call volume numbers stating through May there has been 1,219 9-1-1 calls to the Town of Simsbury of which 1,064 were responded to. She reported only 705 resulted in transports. She added mutual aid represents 13% of those calls and 6% were responded outside by Granby and/or Canton. She added there is a 25% drop in transports in May compared to April and said it speaks to the unpredictability of their business and results in fluctuations in their income. She reported they have been staffing their 2nd response unit up to 85% on average and they are continuing to hire staff to reach as close to 100% as possible.

6) Fire

Mr. Tourville spoke about the interview for the vendor for the Life Safety Analyst for the Simsbury Meadow Performing Arts Center and said it was a great presentation. He said it was the only application submitted. The review panel had positive comments, were excited about

their partnership ideas and recommended to the Town that it gets moved on. He mentioned a soft presentation on the Simsbury Steps to Safety program was given at the pancake breakfast to the elderly community and was well received. He spoke about firework safety with the July 4th Holiday coming up and said they will be sending Fireworks safety tips to the community. He added throughout the summer they will be focusing on water safety and next week they will have information on the fire prevention theme.

Mr. Wilcox thanked Mr. Tourville for the pancake breakfast. He said they held their annual meeting where the budget was passed. He added the mill rate was reduced to 1 mill and he was reelected as President for a two-year term. They have appointed Mike Paine as a replacement commissioner to Tim Zielman.

Mr. Wilcox spoke about the possibility of meeting in person at the next Public Safety meeting to honor Kevin's retirement and get together as a thank you for his service, pending scheduling conflicts.

Chief Baldis reported no major fires since the last meeting, and they assisted Bloomfield with a couple of major house fires. He asked the public for their support in respecting barricades due to a couple of recent incidents. He asked them not to drive around them and reminded everyone to be aware they are in place for their safety and the safety of the folks working on the scene. He mentioned it is a serious issue when people drive around them.

Chief Baldis mentioned they are preparing for their upcoming concerts and reminded the public there will be fireworks at the end of the June 30th concert.

Mr. Askham asked Mr. Fitzgerald to get a notice out to the public on the fireworks and asked the committee to work together and think of some ways to help support each other with regards to the public driving around barricades.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan thanked all the departments who helped with the graduation ceremony celebration. He mentioned that Steve Patrina will be retiring as the high school principal who was a great leader and contributed a lot towards safety procedure over the past 20 years.

He reported ongoing projects include Latimer Lane, the Bleacher replacement project and the Security upgrades and modernization.

They are looking to have the first occupancy into Latimer after the Christmas break. The bleacher project was more of a safety project.

8) Public Works and Engineering

Mr. Roy spoke about entering hurricane season and said they have just renewed their two on-call contracts for debris collection and debris monitoring. He added if they get into a FEMA level event, they can help manage whatever comes their way.

He reminded the public to be aware and cautious of traffic barricades and report any unsafe traffic patterns to either the Police or Public Works.

Mr. Roy also mentioned they have hired new staff members and have offers out to more applications and said they are looking forward to being close to full staff.

9) Social Services

Ms. Formanek spoke about their partnership and collaboration on a number of initiatives including working on a plan to utilize their opioid funding through the opioid settlement. They are working with emergency management on the sheltering and mass care plan, and they are working on a plan to utilize the Senior Center ARPA funding.

She said they are now in their renters' rebate program and said they can help seniors who are renting to complete the application if they need it.

They are helping the Youth Service Bureau with some fun events over the summer and asked the public to keep an eye out for them.

10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz reported that they also see a reduction in business around this time of year.

She said they are involved in the Steps to Safety program, and they hope to make a positive impact. She mentioned they collaborated with Ms. Kertanis and they worked on safety protocols for the school with regards to the smoke issues from the Canadian fires.

11) Main Street Partnership

Ms. Neilson was not present, but her report was read by Mr. Askham. It included the sidewalk project which is well underway and nearing completion. He reported some issues with Aquarium in the center of town with a water main break resulting in a down period.

He said there is much better coordination with signage and eblasts for the recent half marathon and 10K which resulted in a minor impact to business.

No cell phone improvement update.

12) Eversource

Mr. Massaro reported on the impacts to the area due to last night's storm and they had crews available to take care of everything. He said they are getting ready for the upcoming storm season, and they are doing monthly training with their liaison staff. He said they provided a grant for the upcoming Juneteenth event at the Simsbury meadows to offset the costs to the town.

13) Other

Ms. Mackstutis mentioned the Little River Band who are one of the big acts performing at the PAC next Thursday.

Mr. Peterson asked about the legacy construction signage along the bridge project and Mr. Roy said he'd look into it and have them removed as it's likely an oversight.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:44 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Lynott
Commission Clerk