

Public Safety Subcommittee  
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, June 16, 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; **Maria Capriola**, Town Manager; **Jennifer Kertanis**, Farmington Valley Health District; **Mike Long**, Police Commissioner; **Wendy Mackstutis**, First Selectman; **Mark Massaro**, Community Relations & Economic Development Specialist, Eversource; **Sarah Neilsen**, Simsbury Main Street Partnership; **Chris Peterson**, Selectman; **Tom Roy**, Director of Public Works; **Greg Samselski**, Police Department; **Nancy Scheetz**, CEO Visiting Nurses Association; **Karin Stewart**, Executive Director, Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association; **Neil Sullivan**, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Simsbury Schools; **Patrick Tourville**, Fire Marshall; **Jim Traficante**, Assistant Emergency Management Director; **Gary Wilcox**, President, Simsbury Fire District

**Pledge of Allegiance**

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Audience**

Mr. Askham confirmed there was no one on the line for public audience and reminded everyone of the email address to send in written comments. He mentioned the e-mail correspondence received was sent to all members to read.

**Approval of Minutes**

The Minutes from the March 17, 2022 were accepted as presented.

**1) Farmington Valley Health District**

Ms. Kertanis provided a Covid-19 update stating they are in the sixth week of declining numbers. She said they have been working with the schools and businesses to reduce the potential for outbreaks and thanked the school systems for their support. She mentioned all the data is posted on their website and they will be coordinating booster shot locations in the Fall. Ms. Kertanis said they are monitoring the situation with monkeypox and are keeping an eye on people who were potentially exposed or have returned from high risk areas and said at this time there is minimal or no risk to the public. She said they are working on their Community Health Assessment, which outlines the health status of their community, and hopes to have a final version of that in the Fall.

**2) Town Manager's Office**

Ms. Capriola spoke about the reappointment of Mike Berry as Emergency Management Director and thanked him for all his work. She noted that the Month of May was the second largest uptick for positive COVID cases amongst the workforce which may have caused delays to some services. She added they did not have to shut down any essential services.

### **3) Emergency Management**

Mr. Berry reported that Emergency Management is moving into the recovery phase of the COVID pandemic and reminded people to continue to remain vigilant and are taking necessary precautions. He said they have started to do more community outreach and education. They started a new Facebook Simsbury Emergency Management page. He reminded people to check their generators and do a dry run before they are needed as we move into hurricane season. Mr. Berry added they met with the new State Director of Emergency Management and is looking forward to working with him. He said they are working on the emergency management plan for the town and will be meeting with the State to make sure it meets all their qualifications and recommendations. They are working on the emergency management performance grant for 2021/2022. He said all their past grants are complete and they are just waiting for the State to distribute the funds to the town.

### **4) Police**

Lieutenant Samselski reported they have added a traffic officer and are getting their staffing levels ready for the Talcott Mountain Music Festival. He reported an increase in calls related to catalytic converters and a decrease in larcenies of motor vehicles. He also said there is an increase in bear complaints as they have started to come out of hibernation and the department is in the final stages of the Animal Control Officer hiring process. He added they currently have two officers out on extended sick leave with a potential return to work date in mid to late summer, and they are currently taking applications for the two new police officer positions approved for the police department.

### **5) Ambulance**

Ms. Stewart reported Simsbury ambulance is going into their 65<sup>th</sup> year of providing service to the town and to celebrate they are offering town residence free CPR classes. Information and sign up will be posted on their website. She said they are staffing the second ambulance and are in the process of hiring more EMT's and paramedics and have increased their volunteers by adding 4 new members. The town 911 medical calls remain average at around 240 per month. Ms. Stewart provided information on the numbers reported, the usefulness of the second ambulance, and the hours it's scheduled for, and concluded that there is no lack of commitment to providing the second ambulance as it is a necessity for the town due to call volume. She mentioned the communication from a disgruntled employee and that they deny all his accusations, and this is an ongoing issue they are working through. Mr. Askham suggested that a meeting take place with the necessary personnel and report back to everyone on some of the topics raised. He also added that Ms. Capriola will be attending some of the Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association board meetings to increase the transparency with the town. Ms. Capriola commented on the first board meeting she attended last month and said it was an excellent, informative meeting. Mr. Peterson suggested that additional medical training is provided to the town's first responders, and recommended discussions to be held with the Fire and Police Departments to determine how to uptrain their staff to EMT levels.

### **6) Fire**

Mr. Tourville reported the Goodrich's building is almost completed and will provide 55 units for 55 new residences to the town in the month of July. He said the fire marshal's office will be visiting businesses in town to ensure compliance on the sale of fireworks and will be distributing safety brochures throughout the community on fireworks safety. He thanked the Social Services

Department who worked with them to bring back their senior pancake breakfast. He said the fire department was able to deliver fire and life safety messaging on fire and fall prevention, as well as emergency preparedness to the residents. He mentioned the 2022 fire prevention theme is “Fire won’t wait. Plan your escape”, and this year marks 100 years that the NFPA has sponsored the public observance of fire prevention week, making it the longest running public health observance on the country. He mentioned the department has responded to a fire pit incident resulting in 4 people injured and said they have reached out to the business owner to address safety and recommended changes. Chief Baldis provided his update on fire danger, training on the new apparatus, touch a truck activity, the duck race, the colors for high school graduation, and the Talcott Mountain Music Festival. He reviewed two incidents and provided valuable safety information to the public on push button start vehicles, the use of whole house fans and the use of generators outdoors. Mr. Wilcox provided an updated on the passing of the annual budget, and the reelections of their Vice President and Treasurer for another 2-year term. He suggested an in-person Public Safety meeting and breakfast to recognize those retiring.

#### **7) Board of Education**

Mr. Sullivan reported on the upcoming end of the school year and said all the end of year events went well. He provided an update on COVID data and reported 3 out of every 8 people tested positive over the course of the year. He said there was not a lot of test kit wastage and they have mostly been utilized. He mentioned their summer building projects will continue, and they are continuing with the double entry lock systems with Tariffville and Latimer which will conclude all the schools with this safety feature. He mentioned the reunification drills which will take place at Henry James in the Fall.

#### **8) Public Works and Engineering**

Mr. Roy reported that his team has received medical training and they can provide assistance if they are the first on scene to an accident. He mentioned a successful open house and touch a truck event in May, and said the public enjoyed the tour of the facility. He said they will be focusing on sight lines and asked residents to contact them if they have any concerns of overgrowth.

#### **9) Social Services**

No update.

#### **10) VNA**

Ms. Scheetz reported that business is busy, and recommended people to open the COVID test kits as they may have an extended best-by date on the inside. She spoke about the value of the Simsbury ambulance in the community and her appreciation for their service.

#### **11) Main Street Partnership**

Ms. Nielsen said they are working with the Performing Arts Center and the town on minimizing business interruptions and increasing safety at the venue when events are taking place. She mentioned outdoor dining is going well and thanked the team involved in helping with this. She mentioned issues with the Fuse credit card app which has been tampered with and may cause issues and liabilities to the businesses. She mentioned they are still working on the cell phone improvement updates and the committee will be convening shortly to continue to make progress.

**12) Eversource**

Mr. Massaro mentioned if any customers are looking for assistance with billing or special programs, they should contact their customer care center at 1-800-286-2000 as there are many energy programs available. He said they will be running an internal emergency preparedness exercise next week to prepare their staff.

**13) Other**

Ms. Askham mentioned an update from the First Selectwoman regarding “Project Child Safe” which is a new gun lock program partnering with the Police Department. He mentioned the work of the Finance Sub-Committee on ARPA and asked that everyone consider the 501c3’s to receive funds.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Lynott  
Commission Clerk