

Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, June 17, 2021 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 8:03 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; **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; **Tom Roy**, Director of Public Works; **Nancy Scheetz**, CEO Visiting Nurses Association; **Karin Stewart**, Executive Director, Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association; **Patrick Tourville**, Fire Marshall; **Neil Sullivan**, Director of Personnel, Simsbury Schools and **Gary Wilcox**, President, Simsbury Fire District.

Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Audience

N/A

Approval of Minutes

May 20, 2021 Minutes.

The minutes were approved as presented.

Updates

1) Farmington Valley Health District

No Update.

2) Town Manager's Office

Ms. Capriola provided virus statistics, noting that the numbers are looking great, and they have had no reported new cases for four consecutive weeks. 70% or 17,770 residents have received at least the first dose of the vaccine. 62% of residents are fully vaccinated. She reported that in general, the workforce is healthy with 0 staff positive or quarantine cases. The Town Hall, the library, and Enos resumed pre-COVID normal business hours of operation for walk-in visitors as of June 1st. Programming and event sizes are a little slower and smaller but it's getting close to resuming as normal. She mentioned face coverings are required in common areas, especially at the library. The Governor's executive order regarding remote meetings expires at the end of June and several agencies will be returning to in-person meetings around June 28th. Hybrid meeting technology, Owl Labs, has been purchased and is currently being tested.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry reported COVID numbers are good and thanked residents for their diligence in getting the vaccinations. The clinic at the library had finished and residents can now get vaccinations from CVS, Walgreens, and other agencies. He reported no major weather issues, but they are anticipating a busy season. He said they are looking into lifting the Town's state of emergency and will keep everyone advised on any updates. WSIM continues to send out information and spots include the Wildlife Ordinance, the Lock Your Door campaign, the Energy Assistance program, the Food Bank, Fire Safety, and a recruitment drive in Terrafill. Mr. Berry mentioned his assistance completed his ICS300 course and is continuing to work towards his bachelor's degree in Emergency Management. He mentioned he attended a ZOOM class with the National Fire Academy, week 2 of 4. He said they will be working through determining the future of the Emergency Operations Center, and figuring out the amount money, time, and effort to be dedicated to training.

4) Police

Chief Boulter said there was no update on the safety radio system which is continuing to move forward. They completed hiring for two new recruits who are now in the Academy doing training until the end of the year, with on-the-job training expected to be complete around April 2022. They are looking to fill their final police officer vacancy. He mentioned they have had 5 stolen vehicles this year in comparison to 13 this time last year. He encouraged people to be vigilant with locking their vehicles, ensure their key fobs are secure, and remove anything of value from their vehicle. He mentioned they are dealing with stand-alone ATM thefts which is a trend seen across the State. He mentioned a couple have been taken in town this past week and they are working with multiple jurisdictions and a taskforce on these matters.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart mentioned she is working on the Car 17 program, the second ambulance, which was running M-F pre COVID. She said their agenda is to get that back and running again. She mentioned they have hired 3 EMT's per-diem so they are increasing their staff. She said they are looking to get the ambulance running M-F within the next few weeks. Their goal is to have it running 7 days a week. Mr. Askham added that in relation to the letter they received he met with several people to discuss the trends pre and during COVID, and discussions are continuing to ensure the ambulance is staffed accordingly. Ms. Stewart added that the call volume was still the same during COVID, however transports were reduced. Mr. Askham added that no transport means no reimbursement for that call, and the situation has been proactively looked at throughout the pandemic. He added that Simsbury ambulance is in compliance with the contact with the Town, and he was pleased with their proactive work locally and with other agencies outside Simsbury borders. He added that when residents call 911, someone will show up.

6) Fire

Chief Baldis reported they have been busy coming into the summer months. They completed a mountain rescue training drill last month and are working on boat drills this month. They are also setting up for the Talcott Mountain Music Festival on July 2nd for lighting and fireworks protection. He mentioned the quint (engine and ladder) that they ordered has been delayed again due to COVID and material shortages, and the new estimated delivery date will be sometime in

the Fall. He said he will keep everyone updated and, in the meantime, they are well protected with their Tower 12. He reported a significant house fire at the end of last month which rendered the house inhabitable. They were able to stop the fire so that the occupants could salvage a good amount of their personal belongings and no injuries were reported covering the incident. Mr. Tourville spoke about the fireworks show as part of the music festival and said the permits have been submitted to the State. He said for the 4th July he would like to work with all the town agencies in getting out a public education campaign on what is and is not legal in Connecticut. He mentioned that last year they saw a huge increase in the use of consumer grade fireworks and both the Police Department, and he was busy with complaints. They are anticipating it to be just as bad as last year and would like to curb that with the campaign which will cover enforcement, safety, and injuries. He mentioned he is also working to reduce the number of false alarms the fire fighters are receiving for smoke alarms which is an issue. Mr. Wilcox said they are approaching the end of the budget year and is hoping for a surplus to carry back into the budget.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan reported they has a fabulous graduation at Simsbury Meadows and thanked the Performing Arts Center and other town agencies that helped support this great event. The Summer programming will be starting in a week or so and all safety protocols will be in place. He mentioned the timing will be different and due to a ESSER federal grant, school districts need to issue a reopening plan. Community members will be receiving an email in the regard and the goal is to open as normal as possible in the Fall and they are waiting to hear what the mask mandates will be. He said he has had a lot of communications with the community, and he is hopeful masks will not be necessary in schools, but they are still waiting on guidance before they can make that call. He said the major project this summer is the secure and locked vestibule at the front of Tootin Hills School entry to bring it up to the standard.

8) Public Works

Mr. Roy said it's the beginning of thunderstorm season and they have nothing major to report so far. He said last week they held one of two household hazard waste events and they added a shredding service along with that. They will be having another one in the Fall.

9) Social Services

Ms. Formanek reported all is well at ENO and they have reopened and are back to their pre-COVID hours with all staff back in the building. They also welcomed back their seniors to the senior center and their clients to social services. She said they will be starting some small programming this summer and they have had some indoor activity including, card games, the bridge club, and the painters have met indoors. Last week they held an ice cream social outside and it's been great to see people gather again. She said they are looking forward to expanding their programming and services after Labor Day if things continue to go well. She said they have started to scale back on their food programs and the youth services bureau will be pushing out a few programs before the end of the year.

10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz reported they are continuing to partner with the Farmington Valley Health District and Saturday was the last vaccine clinic. She said they assisted with giving out 20,000 vaccines

in 4.5 months and thanked everyone who helped with these events, which was a successful team effort. She mentioned that on Monday the Health Departments stopped by for a Hospice survey which they do every 3 years, and they were extremely successful. Said everyone is getting back to business as usual.

11) Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen said they were very busy, and she thanked Chief Boulter and Detective May for helping with the business outreach plan, which worked very well in helping to inform businesses of the ATM thief. She said there is an increase of outdoor activity outdoors due to events and outdoor dining and reminded residents to be extra careful of pedestrians and cyclists etc. She said they performed a ribbon cutting with the Loan Locker at the Apple Barn, which is a program with aging and disability where people can borrow equipment for free from the Town of Simsbury. She also thanked Mr. Roy who met with her and the Northern Businesses, which are now called the Hoskins Commercial District, to go over a \$1.5M sidewalk plan, and will help increase safety to all the businesses from Antonio's all the way up to the commuter lot in the North.

12) Other

Mr. Massaro spoke about a partnership with a Danish wind turbine company called Orsted and is hoping to bring clean energy wind power to the State of Connecticut in the next year or so. He thanked Chief Baldis who invited them to the Hartford County Fire Emergency annual dinner and said they presented some of the updates they have complete in relation to the annual emergency response plan. They also presented on providing real time information to their municipal hub on what is happening in the community and said the technology to do this is in the testing phase now. He said they are hoping to get this out to everyone by later Summer, and aim start providing training to all the leaders, their emergency response partnerships, and to City and Town dispatchers. He said they will be able to log into the system 24 hours a day to keep informed and updated. He mentioned they are returning to normal with their commercial industrial customers in terms of collections on older bills. He added they are also offering help with payment arrangements and encouraged people to contact their customer support service center. He cautioned that there is an increase in SCAMS in relation to this and reminded residents to call the service center if they get a call asking for payment up front.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Lynott
Commission Clerk