

**TOWN OF SIMSBURY - PUBLIC SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES - MARCH 19, 2020**

ADOPTED

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CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Sean Askham (via phone) called the Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Subcommittee to order at 7:05 A.M. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices, 933 Hopmeadow Street.

Present were: **James Baldis**, Chief, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department (via phone); **Nicholas Boulter**, Chief of Police; **Jennifer Kertanis**, Health Director, FVHD; **Kevin Kowalski**, Fire Marshal, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department (via phone); **Karin Stewart**, Executive Director, Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association (via phone); **Neil Sullivan**, Director of Personnel, Simsbury Schools (via phone); **Thomas Roy**, Director, Public Works; **Gary Wilcox**, President, Simsbury Fire District (via phone). Also in attendance were Michael Berry, Assistant Emergency Management Director, Simsbury Fire District (via phone); Maria Capriola, Town Manager; Kristen Formanek, Director of Community and Social Services (via phone); Mark Massaro, Community Relations Specialist, Eversource (via phone); Sarah Nielsen, Simsbury Main Street Partnership (via phone); Chris Peterson, BOS (via phone); Nancy Scheetz, Visiting Nurses Association (via phone); and Karen Haberlin, Commission Clerk.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC AUDIENCE

There was no Public Audience.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1) Approve Minutes from the Regular Meeting on December 19, 2019

The Minutes were approved as presented.

UPDATES AND REPORTS

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Kertanis reported there has been a doubling of lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 every day. She spoke about testing, noting it is available but still limited in Hartford County but that will change every day. According to State Epidemiologist Matt Carter, for every one lab-confirmed case, it is estimated there are 100 more cases not confirmed. She reported the number of confirmed lab cases likely grossly underestimates the burden of this disease. She spoke about the Governor's declarations regarding closings, social distancing, restaurant and bar closures, distance working, and daycare providers. She added there are good policies and procedures in place. There is concern about the elderly and they are working with Ms. Formanek in regard to that. Guidance has been provided to independent living facilities. She noted the death of a resident in a senior living facility in Ridgefield. They are fielding a lot of questions from municipal departments. She reported the number of lab-confirmed cases in the Farmington Valley as of last night was zero. For any confirmed lab or suspect cases, those individuals will be isolated and provided with guidance on home isolation as long as they are healthy enough to stay home. Contact tracing for those known cases will be done. Home quarantine with follow-up of symptoms will be done as long as can be managed. Social distancing has been very helpful. Questions and discussion followed.

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At the Town level, Ms. Capriola reported she issued an emergency declaration a few days ago, which is now in place. She noted residents are encouraged to use online services. Buildings are now closed to the public. If an urgent need arises individuals will be met in person on an as-needed basis at staff's discretion. Services are being provided over the phone, email and online. A brochure that highlights commonly used online services has been created. A dedicated group of staff is at Town Hall providing essential services. A secure drop box has been established at Town Hall for forms or applications that need processing. Eno Memorial Hall/Social Services has a box for donations. She noted the most-needed items right now at Social Services are non-perishable goods, toiletries, and gift cards to grocery stores, gas stations and laundromats. Donators should call Social Services and let them know they are dropping off a donation. All non-essential meetings have been cancelled. Regulatory meetings are being recorded live and comments from the public can be sent to the Town Clerk's Office at ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov. Ms. Kertanis noted the CDC, CT Department of Public Health and FVHD websites all have current information for the public. They can also call the FVHD office at 860-352-2333 or email at info@fvhd.org. Ms. Capriola encouraged people to visit the link on the Town website homepage for up-to-date information, to sign up for the Town news and announcements email service, and to visit the Town's official Facebook page and Twitter account.

2) Emergency Management

Mr. Kowalski reported the web-based emergency operations center is being updated at least daily. The priority list under the current emergency action plan is to protect all first responders, monitoring the senior population, and assisting businesses. Current information is being sent out daily. He reported six more people have been added to the radio station and live radio work will be done in the evening when possible. Community notes will be on that radio station as well as advertising for businesses and restaurants. Information can be sent to his email at kkowalski@simsburyfd.org.

Mr. Berry reported he is in contact with state officials daily and he is updating web EOC. He has contacted the three convalescent/elderly housing projects to let them know they are up and running and to contact them if they need any assistance or guidance.

Mr. Askham inquired about a definition for shelter-in-place and what that might look like. Mr. Kowalski noted it means to stay home. If it is necessary to go out, make sure it is a valued visit. Go out, get stuff, come back home. He clarified there has been no order to shelter-in-place order at this point. There was discussion about preventing disease transmission.

Ms. Neilsen inquired about whether the FVHD is considering more formal closing directives for salons and nail spas. Ms. Kertanis noted the guidance that has been issued to salons. It was noted many businesses already follow FVHD protocols. Discussion followed about supporting local businesses, outreach mental health services and Town services. Ms. Scheetz volunteered she has nursing staff available for check-ins, especially for mental health and they have nurses who can field calls if needed.

3) Social Services

Ms. Formanek commended her team for its recent work on packing and distributing 150 bags of shelf-stable food, toiletries and gift cards to vulnerable clients.

4) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan reported the BOE is distributing breakfast and lunches on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M. at SHS for anyone in Town with children. (This includes breakfasts and lunches for Monday through Friday.) About 50 people were served on the first day and that number is expected to grow. Schools are shut down. Distance learning will be up and running on Monday. By 9:00 A.M. each day, teachers will put up tasks to compete. The emphasis is on engaging kids and learning.

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Employees are in a work-from-home environment except for custodians, who are cleaning the buildings, and a few nutrition services employees, who are providing the breakfasts and lunches. A few payroll people will also come in every couple of weeks. Discussion followed. Mr. Peterson thanked Mr. Sullivan for all the hard work and communication coming to parents and the quick distance learning turn-around. There was discussion about the special needs community and how they are being supported. Mr. Sullivan reported that case managers and paraprofessionals will be checking in with those families and teachers. Guidance counselors and social workers will be reaching out to families as well. Discussion about internet connectivity followed.

5) Police

Chief Boulter thanked Ms. Kertanis and the FVHD for their assistance and noted the Police Department has been in contact with regional colleagues in the area regarding potential staffing issues. The Department has provided some modification of services to include online applications, telephone reporting and social distancing strategies. There is emergency access to the Police Department; those doors will remain open, but they are encouraging people to call first.

6) Fire

Chief Baldis spoke about protecting first responders, noting they are volunteers. They are encouraging social distancing and cancelling drills. Communications are being done remotely. Some operations procedures have been changed. The building has been closed and the intercom can be used to connect with the dispatcher. They are pre-screening phone calls and limiting personal contact. He noted that down the road, they may be helping with EMS support or other public safety. He also noted they have been in touch with surrounding communities regarding mutual aid. He encouraged being safe in daily living and urged people not to experiment at home trying to make sanitizers or cleaners.

7) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart assured the group they are well stocked with masks. She noted concern about the drop off of load call volume and encouraged people to call 911 if they are having any issues, noting they are here for help if it is needed. She reported they have dropped their internal training program so as not to expose volunteers. There was discussion about the availability of N-95 masks.

8) Public Works

Mr. Roy reported the custodial staff is cleaning the buildings with a disinfectant sanitizer at least two times a day and stations have been set up so that employees can clean and disinfect their work stations. Police have a separate station for cleaning cruisers. He reported Tetrattech has been selected for debris monitoring/FEMA consulting. He invited Mr. Kowalski and Mr. Berry to join a scheduled conference call with them.

9) Other Updates

Based on the collaboration during the meeting, Mr. Askham suggested that another meeting be scheduled in the next week or two. It was agreed that the group will meet on Thursday, March 26 at 8:00 A.M.

Mr. Kowalski noted in the event things get worse, they will open the EOC.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 A.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Karen Haberlin
Commission Clerk