

**Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - APPROVED
Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 8:00 A.M.
Simsbury Town Hall - Main Meeting Room
933 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut**

Chairman Sean Askham (via phone) called the Special Meeting of the Public Safety Subcommittee to order at 8:02 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 (via phone); **Mark Critz**, Director of Safety & Security, BOE; **Jennifer Kertanis**, Health Director, FVHD (via phone); **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 (via phone); **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); Nancy Scheetz, Visiting Nurses Association (via phone); and Karen Haberlin, Commission Clerk (via phone).

Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Audience

There was no public audience.

Coronavirus Response

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Kertanis reported the number of COVID-19 cases in the Farmington Valley is escalating. For every confirmed case there it is estimated there are 100-1000 unconfirmed cases. Yesterday the District put out a message to towns asking that they post it. The message notes that due to the rapid escalation of cases, they need to move to a model that assumes that anyone suffering from fever, cough or difficulty breathing actually has COVID-19. A chart is included which describes what people need to do if they have any of these symptoms or have had contact with anyone who has them. She noted this chart is for the general public and some exceptions are made for first responders. The FVHD continues to do contact tracing for lab-confirmed cases and provides guidance for home isolation. She noted they will continue to do this for as long as there is staff capacity to do so but they will probably exceed their capacity in the next few days. Another message being put out this week is asking return travelers from NYC during the last 14 days should quarantine themselves and monitor their symptoms. Their enforcement/food team has been out in the field. She noted their focus is on food safety and social distancing within food establishments and grocery stores. They are also working closely with long-term care

facilities. Some daycares are still open and they are in communication with them. This continues to be an area of focus.

2) Town Manager's Office

Ms. Capriola reported all buildings are closed to the public. Staff is working modified schedules, rotating in daily, (1 per department), or otherwise working remotely. Crews in the DPW are working alternate schedules and have implemented social distancing practices. Parks and Golf crews have modified schedules in which they report to work in different work locations independently or in teams of 2, practicing social distancing. They are trying to keep people as safe and healthy as possible while also making sure that essential service continues to be maintained. She noted recreational facilities that have been closed, including playgrounds, tennis and paddle tennis courts. She noted trails and parks for passive recreation are still open. Public meetings are closed to the public through at least April 22. Non-essential committees are encouraged not to meet. Meetings are being broadcast live through SCTV. As the Governor extended budget timeframes by 30 days, they will take advantage of that. The Governor also stated public hearings that are open to the public and referendums cannot be held until April 23 or later. In the event that date is pushed out, the BOS has the legislative authority to grant the BOF the authority to adopt a budget without a referendum. Questions and discussion followed about the golf course remaining open.

Mr. Askham reported the BOS budget was passed and moved on to the BOF. The Police Department Deputy Chief and Lieutenant positions are in, as well as the Parks position. He noted there was no reduction in services that would affect this group.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry reported the Incident Action Plan (IAP) time frame is one week until cases ramp up. He noted the IAP for the week has been distributed and asked that IPS-214 forms be filled out for reimbursement. COVID items should be tracked, including personnel, commodities and fuel. He reported Region 3 is being monitored; there is little action. Further, he noted the expected ramping up in this part of the state and the actions that will need to be taken.

Mr. Kowalski reported emergency calls are down substantially. They continue to prioritize protecting first responders. He spoke about masks and personal protective equipment (PPE). Discussion followed. Mr. Kowalski noted the coordinated effort in town between Police, Fire and Ambulance to assist EMS in the event there is a reduction in workforce due to exposure. He added there is coordination with Sarah Nielsen on helping businesses and they have been working with seniors to make sure their needs are met. He noted they have picked up 5 more volunteers for the radio station, WSIM, to do announcements. He added that they need content, which can be emailed to him or to the radio station.

4) Police

Chief Boulter reported some staff is working remotely. There is some rotation of sworn personnel and they have an additional 6 sworn members who can work remotely if needed. He echoed that the call for services is down. Staff is in good health. Equipment is a bit of a concern. He spoke about masks and noted they are in need of 30-40 gowns.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart noted call volume is down. She plans on increasing staff and has, or will, speak with Canton and Granby about ways to consolidate staff. She noted if she loses staff due to exposure the fire department could possibly help out with transport of patients. She is trying to stock up on supplies and noted she can share some masks and gloves. She noted there is a local group sewing masks.

6) Fire

Chief Baldis reported volunteers are home and ready and call volume continues to be very light. Volunteers are practicing social distancing and staying away from the fire station unless a call comes in or to do equipment and apparatus checks/maintenance. Social distancing at events or investigations is being practiced and precautions are being taken with PPE. They are ramping up to provide EMS support if needed. He noted PPE is at a bare minimum and some of it is expired or dry-rotted. They are in need of gowns and eye shields.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan reported the Governor has established that school will not return to session any earlier than April 20. Distance learning started on Monday and early feedback has been strong. A large portion of the organization is engaged in continued work and learning. They are now focusing on non-classroom teachers and their work in supporting families. Nurses, school counselors and social workers are reaching out. The grab-n-go meals for breakfasts and lunches have increased to 100 as of yesterday and will continue to go up. Over 200 Chrome Books have been distributed. There is continued cleaning of the buildings. Custodians and maintenance crews are on staggered schedules.

Mr. Critz reported that masks and gloves from the school supply have been given to Police, Ambulance and a Hartford Hospital nurse. Discussion followed about collaborating with other districts and special education support.

8) Public Works

Mr. Roy reported the buildings, especially the Police Department, are being disinfected two to three times a day. They have been supporting Social Services with some of the work at ENO and making sure the donation bin is brought out each day. Half the workforce is on each day so they are staggered. The Highway Department will continue its maintenance duties but will be ready to respond if anyone needs labor, barricades, or food logistics. He noted there are a number of employees who can help out.

9) Social Services

Ms. Formanek noted staff is working remotely and they are staggering having staff in the building on a daily basis. Food, toiletries and gift cards are being distributed to clients by appointment. The Wednesday hot lunch for seniors is being distributed via curbside pick-up. Public Works has been very helpful in getting tasks done. They are ready to help and do outreach. They are coming up with creative ways to engage seniors with online items and special projects, such as sewing cough masks. Lastly, she noted their calls are down as well.

10) Other

Ms. Nielsen reminded the group of the latest restaurant list online and on Facebook. A list of other businesses that are open, modified open or closed is also being compiled. She released information to small businesses last night on the Department of Economic & Community Development's Bridge Loan, a 0% interest bridge loan for up to 3 months' operating expenses or \$75,000, (the lesser amount). She is fielding emails and calls on this. SPA has put out a loan and local banks have as well. Liberty Bank is putting out a \$5,000 unsecured personal loan for existing customers with 0% interest and deferred payments. Discussion followed.

Ms. Scheetz gave an update on the VNA. She thanked Ms. Stewart for helping with a donation of masks. She reported her staff is in the field and have more patients than they've had in the past month because hospitals are sending them home. The Federal Government has given them no relief in terms of virtual care. They are beginning to get referrals for potential patients that are positive and coming back to the community. She expressed concern over PPE. Discussion followed.

The group agreed to meet again next Thursday, April 2, at 8:00 A.M.

Approval of Minutes

1) Approve Minutes from the Regular Meeting on March 19, 2020.

The minutes were approved as presented.

Adjournment

MOTION: Mr. Kowalski, Mr. Baldis second, to adjourn at 8:50 A.M.; unanimously approved

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Haberlin
Commission Clerk