

**Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
Thursday, April 16, 2020 at 8:00 A.M. – ADOPTED
Zoom Meeting/Simsbury Community Television Live Stream**

Chairman Sean Askham called the Special 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; **Nicholas Boulter**, Chief of Police; **Mark Critz**, Director of Safety & Security, BOE; **Jennifer Kertanis**, Health Director, FVHD; **Kevin Kowalski**, Fire Marshal, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; **Karin Stewart**, Executive Director, Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association; **Neil Sullivan**, Director of Personnel, Simsbury Schools; **Thomas Roy**, Director, Public Works; **Gary Wilcox**, President, Simsbury Fire District. Also in attendance were Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager; Michael Berry, Assistant Emergency Management Director, Simsbury Fire District; Maria Capriola, Town Manager; Kristen Formanek, Director of Community and Social Services; Mark Massaro, Community Relations & Economic Development Specialist, Eversource Energy; Sarah Nielsen, Simsbury Main Street Partnership; Chris Peterson, BOS; Nancy Scheetz, Visiting Nurses Association; 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) April 9, 2020 Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Coronavirus Response

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Kertanis reported there are 162 lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases and 14 deaths in the Farmington Valley to date. They continue to do contact tracing for lab-confirmed cases. She noted the State Department of Health will be issuing detailed information today regarding the status of long-term care facilities by facility name. She reported there are increases and some deaths in long-term care facilities. Further, she noted that report will come out every Thursday from the State. Yesterday she received a very modest amount of personal protective equipment (PPE). They have prioritized where that PPE will be made available and the distribution point is in Avon. She indicated the Governor will likely issue a declaration regarding the wearing of masks while out in public and noted the FVHD issued that recommendation a week ago. Regarding data, she noted they will look at trends, however testing and hospitalization numbers remain a limitation. Ms. Kertanis noted the peak for the Farmington Valley may be a week or

more out. Lastly, she noted complaints about businesses and lack of PPE or social distancing have declined.

2) Town Manager's Office

Ms. Capriola reported that public buildings continue to remain closed to the public. A skeleton crew is coming as needed and most staff is working remotely. She noted there is creative work going on and gave the example of N-95 masks being made using a 3-D printer at the Library. Public Works, Parks and Recreation and Golf crews are working in different locations using modified schedules and practices. There are a number of facility closures, including the temporary closure of the transfer station until further notice. If there is an urgent need for disposal of items, Public Works can be contacted. For routine needs people should contact their waste hauler, (All Waste or Paine's). Playgrounds, the skate park, basketball courts, paddle and tennis courts remain closed to the public. Parks and open space remain open for passive recreation. The April household hazardous waste collection has been cancelled. Public meetings will be closed through May 20. She reminded residents they can stay informed through email updates called News and Announcements on the simsbury-ct.gov homepage and on Facebook and Twitter. Another public service announcement will be made after this meeting. Lastly, she referenced the tax deferral and low interest rate programs being offered. She indicated the Tax Collector's Office and the IT Department have made information and applications on those programs available on the Tax Collector's web page. Applications will be accepted as of May 1.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry reported they participated in a Region 3 distribution in West Hartford yesterday. They continue to look for PPE. He noted one facility requested assistance from the region this week. Other facilities have reported they are doing well, however numbers of patients will continue to go up. He encouraged patience, noting tensions are high. He indicated stores are cooperating and asked that people continue to work through this patiently. They continue to update Web EOC daily and distribute messages on WSIM.

Mr. Kowalski added they continue to look for PPE, noting State and Federal PPE is initially going to mass care facilities. They are purchasing P-95 masks and did some fit testing for a facility in the community. He noted he will be on a conference call with FEMA today regarding reimbursement. He referenced the Medical Reserve Corps request. He noted they will have an additional 500 non-medical masks for town needs and he has coordinated the inventory list with Ms. Formanek for Social Services.

4) Police

Chief Boulter reported staffing levels remain consistent and adequate. Many precautions have been taken to preserve staffing levels, integrity of services and PPE. They have received a small quantity of PPE from the State. Calls for service are relatively low. They are updating staffing levels through Web EOC on a daily basis. He reported continued compliance with recommendations and guidelines, noting they have not received many phone calls about people violating social distancing guidelines.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart reported they have received PPE from the State and they are going through PPE quickly. They need gowns, in particular. Call volume is steady and 100% COVID-19 related now. She reported no staffing issues at this point. A cluster of calls was received yesterday from McLean. She will try to address this with Mr. Kowalski's assistance. She also reported she has some cloth face masks which she can share.

6) Fire

Chief Baldis reported status quo regarding COVID-19 response. He dispelled social media rumors, reporting there are no illnesses among members or their family members. The Chief has not been tested and the Chief does not have COVID-19. They continue to follow social distancing guidelines. There was a significant structure fire on Easter Sunday, resulting in a complete loss of a two-car garage and two automobiles, damage to a third automobile, and damage to the house, making it uninhabitable. The occupants got out safely and there were no reported injuries from firefighting staff. The fire was started by fire pit ashes which were placed in a plastic trash receptacle. He noted it is important to continue to remind the public about the importance of proper ash disposal. Ashes need to be put in a metal container for several days. Once they are cool to touch, they can be put in a trash receptacle. He reported an increase in open burning activity, adding that open burning is not permitted. Information on campfires and a permit form are available on the website at simsburyfire.org.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan noted this week is April break and distance learning will resume on April 20. Schools will remain closed until May 20 and plans are being made in case that extends to the end of the school year. Staff only will have brief access to the buildings on April 22 from 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. He noted the grab-n-go meals have operated during break.

8) Social Services

Ms. Formanek reported they continue to collect the hand-sewn masks and supplies for making them. Over 200 masks have been received and are available. Curb-side pickup of lunch for seniors on Wednesdays continues and masks have been given out at that time. A large distribution of food, toilet paper, grocery gift cards, and Necker's gift cards for children has been given to vulnerable families. She encouraged donations of food, toiletries, gift cards, or monetary, to the office to help fund a possible third distribution. Staff continues to report intermittently to the building and from home. She reported a slight increase in requests for help with expenses. They are updating a resource list on their website. Staff is healthy and going strong.

9) Public Works

Mr. Roy reported they have been helping at Eno. They continue to protect staffing levels by wearing masks and disinfecting buildings multiple times per day. He noted the safe reopening of the landfill is being discussed. Mr. Roy added there was a significant windstorm on Monday, to which crews responded well using social distancing.

10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz reported they have some PPE. They are taking care of step-down COVID-19 positive patients from UCONN. Staff remains healthy.

11) Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen reported the business community is hanging on and encouraged people to support them if they can. Masks are being made and can be purchased from Meral's Tailoring in the Simsbury Town Shops for \$10. Her number is 860-217-1924. The \$10 helps her donate hundreds of masks to healthcare professionals. Main Street continues to get non-medical face masks out to workers. They continue to update the business and restaurant list at shopsimsbury.com and on their Simsbury CT Facebook page. She added that Maher's Paint in Avon and Simsbury Paint are accepting five gallons of old paint per home, per week, during business hours. She advised people to call ahead. Discussion followed.

12) Other

The group agreed to meet again next Thursday, April 23, at 8:00 A.M.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Haberlin
Commission Clerk