

**Public Safety Subcommittee  
TOWN OF SIMSBURY  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - ADOPTED  
Thursday, April 2, 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 8:01 A.M. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices, 933 Hopmeadow Street.

Present were: **James Baldis**, Chief, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; **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); Melissa Marquis, Public Health Emergency Specialist, FVHD (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 (via phone).

**Pledge of Allegiance**

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Audience**

There was no public audience.

**Approval of Minutes**

1) March 26, 2020 Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

**Coronavirus Response**

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Kertanis reported it has been three weeks since the first CT case of COVID-19 and there are 3,128 confirmed cases in the state as of April 1. The Farmington Valley has 42 lab-confirmed cases as of April 1. There are significant issues with lab testing. Priority is being given to hospital workers and those who are seriously ill. She noted the need to double-up on efforts relating to ensuring people are staying home. She reported the CDC is changing its guidance almost daily. Significant guidance given this week provided return-to-work policies for healthcare workers and first responders and the FVHD has pushed that out to police departments. She noted grocery stores in the Farmington Valley are doing a tremendous job. She stressed the need to inform the public about grocery store guidelines, re: limiting trips, not

bringing children, and alternative ways of getting groceries for the elderly. She will be working on a flyer with these guidelines. She reported long-term care facilities are in good shape with personal protective equipment (PPE). Alternative care facilities are being set up near hospitals and around the state for patients who are well enough not to be hospitalized but need some nursing care. The FVHD continues to track cases and contacts. She indicated the need is greater than the lab results suggest. Questions and discussion followed. It was noted there are seven cases in Simsbury as of April 1. There was discussion about groups congregating at playgrounds and basketball courts. It was agreed signage needs to be made and posted at the facilities and an email to students and parents should be sent addressing this issue. Chief Boulter noted people must be given notice. There was discussion about a possible 10 v. 10 game being organized. Mr. Sullivan indicated he will work with Mr. Roy and Mr. Critz on a signage message and Ms. Kertanis offered to assist with that messaging. Ms. Capriola noted she will work on moving the goal posts.

## 2) Town Manager's Office

Ms. Capriola commended her team and noted she is very proud of the work everyone has been doing during this challenging time. She reported all town buildings have been closed to the public for two weeks. Staff is coming in on a very limited basis as necessary. Staff is available by phone or email and online services are available. She indicated considerable time is being spent on Executive Orders from the Governor. In response to an inquiry from a resident regarding a curfew, she noted municipal CEOs can no longer take more restrictive measures than what the Governor has put in place. She reminded the group that basketball courts, playgrounds, and tennis courts are now closed. She noted parks and open space parcels and trails are open for passive recreation and encouraged social distancing at those areas. She noted meetings are still closed to the public through at least April 22, which may be extended. Most advisory committee meetings are not meeting. A limited number of public meetings are being held at this time and they are being aired live on SCTV. She noted comments may be made in writing and sent via email to [ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov](mailto:ebutler@simsbury-ct.gov). She encouraged people to sign up for email updates called News and Announcements on the [simsbury-ct.gov](http://simsbury-ct.gov) homepage, Facebook and Twitter.

## 3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry noted they are constantly on the search for PPE as they have a small supply and have received no deliveries from the State. He continues to be in contact with regional and state officials. He is putting updates on Web EOC and sending information out to residents on WSIM. They are keeping in touch with long-term care facilities.

Mr. Kowalski noted Web EOC keeps everyone in the State on notice of what Simsbury is doing. PPE requests and emergency declarations are on there. The EOC will open when decisions have to be made immediately for the purposes of emergency response. It is not open now because they are just in standby mode right now. Further, he noted there are daily conference calls with the important stakeholders. He added WSIM is multiplying its listeners by hundreds every day.

## 4) Police

Chief Boulter reported the lobby is closed and very few people are coming in. Staffing levels are doing very well and they have looked at scheduling options in order to limit exposure. Call volumes are very low. Equipment needs are satisfactory right now. They have received one box

of medical gloves and 30 face masks from the State at this point. He added they have received donations from businesses and individuals, including medical gloves, surgical masks, and N95 masks. They are receiving notifications from FVHD on confirmed addresses in town. He also noted all of the communication from this group has been unbelievable and he appreciates that. He spoke about the offers of face shields and masks being made by people at home and the generosity and benevolence of people at this time. He reported officers have been to houses with infected people. They are doing a great job protecting themselves and providing the necessary care for patients.

In response to a few inquiries made, Ms. Capriola noted they are not releasing private protected health information of individuals to the general public. Ms. Kertanis added three points on the subject; noting compliance of CT General Statute 19A-25, which speaks to confidentiality of health data; specific guidelines from the Health Commissioner about protecting personal identifiable data; and the message remaining the same on the actions people need to take to protect themselves. There was discussion about the hand-sewn face masks and the appropriate use of them.

#### 5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart reported she also got a small amount of PPE from the State. They are collecting and stockpiling what they can. She noted residents have dropped off donations, which is greatly appreciated. Call volume is very low. Staffing is still very strong. She noted concern regarding putting staff in quarantine if there is an increase in exposure calls. She has a back-up staffing plan in place with the Fire Department and mutual aid towns. She reported a few crews have been exposed to COVID-19-positive patients. They are all being monitored. They all adhered to strict PPE policies so the risk is very low. She reported they have a system for disinfecting the ambulances. Lastly, she spoke about the possibility of changing protocols as cases rise.

#### 6) Fire

Chief Baldis reported staffing is in good shape. Volunteers are staying healthy. He noted the cooperation and communication among agencies have been second to none and very helpful. He echoed that they have been working with Ambulance on a plan. They are also working to secure additional resources. They continue to maintain their level of response. They are not conducting drills but have established online training programs for their membership. He reported an uptick in open burning in backyards and noted this is not allowed. There was discussion about the transfer station and the safe disposal of items. Mr. Kowalski noted the need to discuss this further.

#### 7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan reported they are doing a lot of problem solving with distance learning. The Grab-n-go breakfast and lunch program is serving about 80 children. On Monday they distributed 320 meals and on Wednesday they distributed 480 meals. Regarding signage for the playgrounds, he noted he will contact Mr. Roy and Mr. Critz about that. He also noted the BOE is honoring school vacation during the week of April 13.

Mr. Critz spoke about PPE he has given out and offered what he has left to the group.

Mr. Peterson asked for clarification that there is no distance learning during the school vacation week and noted concern about people not staying home that week. Mr. Critz added that there is discussion about the grab-n-go breakfasts and lunches still being made available during vacation.

#### 8) Public Works

Mr. Roy reported they are keeping up with disinfection protocols for the Police Station and town buildings. They are working on getting disinfection that Police can carry on their person or in each cruiser. They have been working with Social Services in supporting the food program. He will be working on the signage and offered to help in any way they can.

#### 9) Social Services

Ms. Formanek reported they have been working with McLean on the distribution of lunches for seniors on Wednesdays and are delivering between 25-35 lunches. They continue to offer food and gift cards to clients who are experiencing food insecurity. They are putting information on their website and on Facebook. She has gotten an increase in phone calls regarding financial assistance needed due to layoffs. They are communicating about the Renter's Rebate program as there may be a delay in the start date.

#### 10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz thanked Ambulance, Fire and the School system for reaching out to them in the past week regarding PPE and noted they have received lots of support from the community as well. From a clinical standpoint, she noted the cloth masks can be used over surgical or N95 masks to make them last longer. She noted concern about groups of people outside. Lastly, she noted community nurses are available for shopping and deliveries for seniors.

#### 11) Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen reported they have issued the new State of CT "Safe Store Rules," which notes occupancy capping, discontinuing self-serve foods and touch-less credit card transactions. She noted the business community is stepping up to support first responders and healthcare workers. Further, she reminded people that there is a list of restaurants and their services available, and the list of essential businesses that are open, modified-open, or closed. She added that the First Church of Christ has a Compassionate Response Team, which handles a variety of issues, but also does grocery delivery in partnership with Fitzgerald's. Ms. Nielsen was thanked for her efforts by several meeting attendees.

#### 12) Other

Mr. Kowalski noted that the Fire Department can set up a shipping/receiving area for supplies and can post a list of what they have for this group.

Chief Baldis added that the Ladies Auxiliary has established an Easter Bunny Run with the Fire Truck on Easter Sunday starting at 10:00 A.M. It will not be stopping and there will be no direct interaction. It will be live broadcasted on Twitter and route information is available on the Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company Facebook page.

The group agreed to meet again next Thursday, April 9, at 8:00 A.M.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Haberlin  
Commission Clerk