

**Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES - ADOPTED
Thursday, April 23, 2020 at 8:00 A.M.
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: Melissa Appleby, Deputy Town Manager; James Baldis, Chief, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; Michael Berry, Assistant Emergency Management Director, Simsbury Fire District; Nicholas Boulter, Chief of Police; Maria Capriola, Town Manager; Mark Critz, Director of Safety & Security, BOE; Kristen Formanek, Director of Community and Social Services; Jennifer Kertanis, Health Director, FVHD; Kevin Kowalski, Fire Marshal, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; Melissa Marquis, Public Health Emergency Specialist, FVHD; Mark Massaro, Community Relations & Economic Development Specialist, Eversource Energy; Sarah Nielsen, Simsbury Main Street Partnership; Chris Peterson, BOS; Nancy Scheetz, Visiting Nurses Association; 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

Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Audience

There was no public audience.

Approval of Minutes

1) April 16, 2020 Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Coronavirus Response

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Kertanis reported there are 239 cases in the Farmington Valley and 37 in Simsbury to date. There have been 34 deaths in the Farmington Valley, 3 of those in Simsbury. She reported the regional PPE distribution this week consisted of a small amount, therefore, no pod distribution will take place. She noted contact tracing will become more critical in the next weeks. She anticipates the Farmington Valley will need 5-20 contact tracers based on its population. She noted volunteers are ready and include school nurses. The State is working on getting a cloud-based platform for tracking cases. Regarding the Governor reopening the State, she noted they will support the community and businesses in doing that safely. They continue to do contact tracing, which will become more challenging.

Mr. Sullivan inquired about the school nurses doing contact tracing. Ms. Kertanis indicated they will follow-up on that with the schools as an option.

2) Town Manager's Office

Ms. Capriola reported that public buildings remain closed to the public. Staff continues coming in as needed and most staff is working remotely. She noted she is impressed with staff who keep finding creative solutions, noting the Library is offering virtual programming. The Planning Department is piloting doing residential building inspections using Zoom. Also, the Senior Center is looking at offering virtual fitness classes. Further, she noted an increase in work load due to an uptick in land record filings and recordings, an increase in code enforcement cases and more people reaching out to Social Services for assistance. The rule on face coverings for employees while at work was implemented yesterday. She noted Parks & Recreation staff is doing a great job keep parks clean and safe during this time of heavy usage. The Transfer Station remains closed. Playgrounds, the skate park, basketball courts, paddle and tennis courts remain closed to the public. Meetings will remain closed through at least May 20 and most public meetings are utilizing Zoom at this point. She noted the Board of Finance Public Hearing this week was done virtually and had great participation. As a reminder, she noted a flyer was sent out on social media which explains how people can stay informed.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry reported they participated in a Region 3 distribution yesterday and supplies were meager. They continue to look for PPE. He reported two of the three long-term care facilities in town have positive cases. They are providing staffing assistance at one of those facilities. They continue to send out information on WSIM and will be adding the Governor's speeches to that.

Mr. Kowalski added they have enrolled in the FEMA reimbursement program for public assistance and encouraged the group to do so. They were not able to receive any PPE from public health and they have purchased some on their own. They have been assisting with fit testing and will do that electronically. He referenced the recent wind storm and Mr. Massaro's great help with that. He reported a substantial increase in open burning complaints and people calling the office with requests to burn.

Mr. Massaro noted they are working to keep their staff safe and will continue to keep Mr. Kowalski and Chief Baldis up to date with progress.

4) Police

Chief Boulter reported staffing levels are adequate. Their PPE supply is adequate. He reported a slight increase in calls for service after three quiet weeks. Those include illegal dumping, attempted burglaries, car thefts and attempted breaks into vehicles. Regarding the enforcement of the Governor's Executive Orders, he noted they are now able to issue a violation of a town ordinance.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart reported she was able to get a decent amount of PPE from the Region 3 distribution yesterday and noted they are pretty well stocked. Staff is all healthy. Call volume is still down. She reminded the general public to please call if they have any issues or concerns. Lastly, she reported they were able to apply for and get the Payroll Protection Plan from the SBA.

6) Fire

Chief Baldis reported calls are light and volunteers are healthy and ready to respond. They are still seeing open burning and will continue to monitor that. He asked that people take this time to ensure their house number is visible and can be seen from different angles.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan reported there has been no further guidance regarding closing schools beyond May 20 but they are planning beyond that date. He noted they are compiling costs for FEMA reimbursement. Staff was able to enter the buildings yesterday successfully. The grab-n-go meals continue at a very stable rate of about 70 students very consistently accessing that program. He reminded people that the meals are distributed at Simsbury High School on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 P.M.

8) Public Works

Mr. Roy reminded people that the Household Hazardous Waste Collection scheduled for this Saturday has been cancelled. He noted people can call their office if they have questions about where they can dispose of brush, paint or other items that would typically go to the landfill. They continue to monitor weather and have modified how they respond to events in order to keep their employees safe. They continue to support ongoing town operations.

9) Social Services

Ms. Formanek reported they continue to work hard to meet needs. There is now a live exercise class online. Their latest newsletter will go out soon. They continue to see an increased need in people needing food. Social Services does not have a large food supply at this time but they are hoping to have another distribution next week. She noted donations that have been given. The Wednesday hot lunch is getting 30-40 people coming each week. They continue to coordinate the hand-sewn masks. Staff is healthy. It was suggested that a list of needed donations be posted online.

10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz reported they are doing well. She noted they have an adequate supply of PPE. They are taking care of COVID patients, primarily step-down. She noted concern that some of their patients are in facilities, which cannot be accessed some days. Regarding the upcoming flu season, she noted they will be having flu vaccine clinics from September to December and she is planning on increasing capacity for those. She reminded people that the VNA will come to businesses to give flu shots.

11) Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen reported they are working daily with the business community and thanked them for their donations. She noted there are non-surgical masks being made by mask companies and ponchos or painting overalls can be used in place of medical gowns. Lastly, she asked that the Town be lenient about giving out sign violations during this time as businesses that are open need to post signage.

12) Other

Mr. Askham asked for clarification on the Governor's Executive Order beginning Monday regarding face masks. Ms. Kertanis explained that the general public is encouraged to wear face coverings or masks when they cannot maintain social distancing, for example in a grocery store. She also noted guidance for employers has been issued.

Mr. Peterson spoke about PPE preparedness for the future. Discussion followed.

The group agreed to meet again next Thursday, April 30, at 8:00 A.M.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Haberlin
Commission Clerk