

**Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, May 7, 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: 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; Jennifer Kertanis, Health Director, FVHD; Kevin Kowalski, Fire Marshal, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; 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; Eric Wellman, First Selectman; 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 30, 2020 Minutes

The minutes were approved as presented.

Coronavirus Response

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Kertanis reported there are 31,000 positive cases and 2700 deaths in the State, 448 positive cases and 70 deaths in the Farmington Valley, a majority of which is older in population and in long-term care facilities. She gave an update on testing and noted it is central to the ability to move forward. Regarding PPE, she reported all long-term care facilities will be receiving a 14-day supply shipped directly to them. The FVHD continues to get a small allotment each week. They are tracking directives from the Governor regarding businesses reopening after May 20 and developing guidelines. Discussion and questions followed regarding prioritizing testing for people with symptoms, reporting data, and distribution of PPE.

2) Town Manager's Office

Ms. Capriola reported there was a soft reopening of the transfer station yesterday and a full reopening is planned for Saturday, with modifications. The Town and Board of Education tennis courts will be reopening tomorrow afternoon with modified practices. Information on this is

available on the Town website and through social media. Town buildings remain closed to the public at this time with most staff working remotely and reporting to the office as needed and providing services online. Parks and Golf crews are reporting daily with modified work practices. Plans for reopening buildings are being made in consultation with the health district. Playgrounds, the skate park and basketball courts remain closed to the public. Parks, trails and open spaces are open. Meetings remain closed to the public and are being broadcast live on SCTV. The Budget referendum is not permitted per the State and the Board of Finance is tentatively scheduled to adopt the budget on May 19. A high-level overview of the adopted budget will be sent out as a mailer to residential and commercial properties. She noted the budget currently reflects a decrease in the mill rate and a decrease in taxes of about \$50 for the median-valued home. She noted applications are being accepted for the tax deferral program and are available on the Tax Collector's website. Ms. Capriola provided an update on Social Services, noting over 800 hand sewn face masks have been donated and the public should reach out if they need one. Donations being accepted include toiletries, non-perishable food items, gift cards for grocery stores, gas stations and laundromats. Financial donations to support food programs and emergency needs are also being accepted. She thanked Main Street Partnership, the Chamber of Commerce and Business Andrew Sherman of the Library for their work with the business community. They are looking at guidelines and logistics for temporary outdoor restaurant dining. A long-term recovery committee will be established in the next few weeks. Bob Crowther and Tom Earl of the EDC and Andrew Sherman will be on that committee. She reminded residents they can stay informed by subscribing to the news and announcements emails and by following the Town on social media. Another public service announcement will go out tomorrow afternoon. Ms. Capriola was asked about the Town pool opening. She indicated she is working on that with Parks and Recreation staff and will be presenting on that at next Monday's Board of Selectmen meeting. Mr. Askham reminded listeners that Town staff is working even though buildings are closed.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Berry reported he participated in a conference call yesterday with the Governor on the May 20 reopening but did not receive specifics with regard to emergency management questions. WSIM 103.5 continues to put out information. The small business POD is continuing on Tuesdays. The long-term care POD continues on Wednesdays. Their focus is now on recovery mode, although they continue to support long-term care facilities.

Mr. Kowalski added that the long-term care facilities have reached out to the medical reserve corps. They continue to manage the PPE supply at the Fire Department. They are receiving weekly PPE from the State. He thanked Ms. Nielsen for handing that out to businesses. They are also actively taking part in the task force to reopen restaurants safely. They continue to monitor the EAP for needs and participate in conference calls.

4) Police

Chief Boulter reported staffing is good and healthy. He noted about 20% of staff is working remotely as much as they can and everyone is still working. Call volume is steady, increasing slightly. As outdoor activity increases, they will put out reminders on safety for pedestrians and cyclists. He noted the bears are back out. He also noted there are potential scams to be aware of

regarding stimulus checks, job opportunities and “porch pirates.” They continue to work on getting more PPE.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart reported crews are healthy. Call volume is steady with a bit of a decrease in COVID calls. She was able to pick up a good supply of PPE from the State yesterday.

6) Fire

Chief Baldis reported members and families are healthy. They continue to use social distancing, wear masks during calls and they are conducting meetings virtually, including weekly drills. Call volume is pretty low. There is an uptick in open burning. He reminded residents there is no open burning of any brush, lawn or construction material. With the increase in hiking he reminded people to make sure they have a well-charged cell phone in case they have an issue. He noted the river remains very high and very cold, asking people to be careful and vigilant of conditions.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan noted the Governor’s closing of schools for the remainder of this academic year. The Return to Simsbury Schools Task Force is looking at reopening in the fall from an operational standpoint and will begin meeting next Monday. He noted this weekly Public Safety Subcommittee meeting is a model for that. Summer camps are allowed to move forward and he noted they will be looking for recommendations from Ms. Kertanis on this.

Mr. Critz noted the grab-n-go program is still going forward with about 72 families participating this week.

8) Public Works

Mr. Roy noted a successful soft opening of the landfill yesterday. Currently, it is only open to people with existing permits with no cash transactions. On Saturday it will open for full service. They are looking at how to open town buildings safely. They continue to support town departments with disinfection supplies. He noted an uptick in construction by the Town and utility companies. They will be monitoring the weather system this Saturday. Lastly, he provided an update on the work being done on Firetown Road. Aquarion Water installed a large water main last summer. There will be new pavement this year, replacing of sidewalks, and Aquarion will be replacing water mains on some of the side streets including Simscroft.

9) Social Services

Ms. Capriola noted the Social Services update was covered in her report.

10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz reported her staff continues to be safe and healthy. They continue to take care of patients, have enough PPE for now and are doing well. She added they will be looking at new ways to do vaccination clinics in the fall.

11) Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen thanked Ms. Kertanis, the FVHD team and Jason Brown for their work towards reopening of outdoor dining, salons and other businesses. She noted they will be distributing masks to essential business owners this week and to get orders in for that as the supply is limited. Yesterday the shopsimsbury.com and Facebook list of businesses was updated. She noted Peachwave, Main Moon and Starbucks have all reopened as of yesterday. She asked that the public be patient with businesses on Mother's Day and on the May 20 reopening of businesses. Lastly, she noted that Main Street Partnership has asked the Board of Selectmen to waive fees for outdoor dining.

12) Other

Mr. Massaro noted Eversource participated in video calls this week with the State and Public Utility Regulatory Authority (PURA) and he will forward that information to the Subcommittee. He encouraged listeners to visit their website or Aquarion's website for that information as well.

Mr. Askham noted the wildlife ordinance will be back on the agenda soon.

The group will meet again next Thursday, May 14, at 8:00 A.M.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Haberlin
Commission Clerk