

Public Safety Subcommittee  
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 8:00 A.M.  
Zoom Meeting/Simsbury Community Television Live Stream

**Mr. Peterson** called the Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Subcommittee to order at 8:03 A.M. via Zoom Meeting/Simsbury Community Television Live Stream.

Present were:

**James Baldis**, Chief, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; **Maria Capriola**, Town Manager; **Chris Davis**, Deputy Chief of Police; **Tom Fitzgerald**, Management Specialist; **Kristen Formanek**, Director of Community & Social Services; **Mark Massaro**, Community Relations & Economic Development Specialist, Eversource; **Tom Roy**, Director of Public Works; **Karin Stewart**, Executive Director, Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association; **Neil Sullivan**, Director of Personnel, Simsbury Schools; **Jim Traficante**, Assistant Emergency Management Director; **Gary Wilcox**, President, Simsbury Fire District; **Nancy Scheetz**, Farmington Valley VNA

#### Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### Public Audience

Mr. Peterson read a letter dated April 29, 2021 submitted by Christin Traficante, 21 North Drive, Simsbury CT. The letter was in relation to a long response time after calling 911 for a medical emergency stating it took 32 minutes for an ambulance to respond. The letter asked about the staffing of the Simsbury Voluntary Ambulance Association and requested an investigation into the delayed response time. Mr. Peterson said that it is being reviewed and they will respond back with meaningful results, actionable items, and content.

#### Approval of Minutes

April 22, 2021 Minutes. Mr. Wilcox noted that he should be listed as an attendee. The minutes were approved as amended.

#### Updates

##### *1) Farmington Valley Health District*

No Update.

##### *2) Town Manager's Office*

Ms. Capriola provided virus statistics, noting the Town is currently at the Yellow Status meaning there are more than 5 but less than 10 cases per 100,000 residents. For the 2-week period ending May 8<sup>th</sup> there were 6.8 cases, which was a decrease from 10 per 100,000 residents. She reported they are starting to see downward trends. The positivity rate was 1.9% among those tested, which was a decrease from 2.5% on May 1<sup>st</sup>. There were 24 cases during that period, which was a decrease from 35 cases for the prior 2-week period. Preliminary data as of May 12<sup>th</sup> indicated 16,249 residents have at least received their 1<sup>st</sup> dose of the vaccination, or 64% of the population, which was up from 61% last month. 54% or 13,678 are now fully vaccinated. The Farmington

Valley Health District is still holding their weekly vaccination clinics at the library on Wednesdays through June 9th. She reported that in general, the workforce is healthy with 0 staff positive or quarantine cases as of May 10th. The Town Hall, the library, and Eno will resume pre-COVID normal business hours of operation as of June 1st and staff will be resuming their normal in-person work schedule on May 23rd. Ms. Appleby said patrons will be asked to wear a mask in the building and a more detailed announcement will be released. Virtual or hybrid meetings will continue through July 20th and a transition plan is being worked on. She said they are currently working through the process to purchase and install new technology in some of the meeting rooms to accommodate the hybrid mode of working.

### *3) Emergency Management*

Mr. Traficante reported clinics are continuing until mid-June. Governor's conference calls and DPH calls have ended, and they are working with IT to get their website updated. He mentioned Eversource has a new reporting and management system. WSIM are ending all the COVID-19 spots and spots will continue wildlife safety, lock your doors, lock your cars at night, and food sharing with social services.

### *4) Police*

Chief Davis provided an update on hiring and said they are hoping to have 2 entry level police candidates hired in time to begin the police academy starting on June 4th. April 2022 is the expected time to have them trained and active. He said there is one additional vacancy which they are still looking to fill. The radio system upgrade initial completion date of the end of May may be delayed and should be done by early to mid-June. Mr. Peterson asked about the increased police officers in certain areas and Chief Davis said they have increased their visibility and presence in areas where they have received complaints from residence.

### *5) Ambulance*

Ms. Stewart had submitted numbers and went through a few highlights over the past 12 months. She reported that they received over 2,300 calls, and responded to 1,985 of which 1,259 of those resulted in transport. She said they saw a noticeable decline in transport during COVID, but the call volume remained the same. Mutual aid responded to 394 calls in Simsbury and 141 in other local area towns. The average response time was reported at 1 minute 43 seconds which is the time from dispatch to being en route. She reported the busiest day of the week is Tuesday which fluctuates, and the busiest time is from 9am to 7pm, with an unusual spike around 3pm. In 2020 the second ambulance was scheduled for 1,500 hours and to date it is scheduled for 471 hours. They are currently looking to hire 2-3 more EMT's to expand on that program and return to normal services.

### *6) Fire*

Chief Baldis reported their COVID situation remains stable. Masking restrictions are starting to loosen up following vaccinations which is currently over 90% of members. He reported it being quiet on the fire front over the past few weeks and mentioned the worst of the brush fire season is past. He reminded residents to continue to take care and there is still a no open burning in effect which is a year-round policy and mentioned that residents should contact the fire marshal's office for a permit for any back yard campfires. He asked that when using an outside fireplace to

be mindful of smoke effecting neighbors. He said he with the Summer approaching they are seeing an increase in outdoor activities and he anticipates being involved in any upcoming festivals or music events with their standby lighting details.

*7) Board of Education*

Mr. Sullivan reported fewer COVID cases and less quarantining and they are now turning their vaccination efforts towards students. The Farmington Valley Health District are sponsoring clinics for age 12 up. East Grandy High held one on Tuesday and Henry James will be hosting one this Saturday for 12–18-year-olds. The mask mandate is still in place in schools, and he said they have not eased restrictions in that regard and will meet over the Summer to determine the plans moving forward. He mentioned protocols are in place for COVID safe Prom and Graduations. He reported that Tootin Hills will start the vestibule construction project over the Summer.

*8) Public Works*

Mr. Roy said they are continuing their FEMA submission for the tropical storm Isaiah and are close to completion. He said they competed in the Eversource ERP review which was beneficial and helpful as they move into thunderstorm season which will be followed by tropical storm and hurricane season. He mentioned their custodian department have been helping with the vaccine clinic at the library. He concluded with reminding everyone that it is Public Works Awareness week and asked people to acknowledge a worker and thank them.

*9) Social Services*

Ms. Formanek reported all is good, their staff is healthy, and they are preparing to reopen their building to the public. Staffing will be returning to pre-COVID hours next week and then seniors and social services clients will be welcomed back on June 1<sup>st</sup>. They will have modified and small group activities inside the building with some outdoor programing also. Information was provided in their newsletter which is also available online. She mentioned they are starting their renters rebate program in person and virtually and continuing with Cheese Day in its current format through the Summer with the hopes of moving it back inside the building in the Fall. She said they are still in need of grocery store gift cards for the Cheese Day program and asked for donations. She reminded residents that they still have a lot of cloth masks of anyone needs them.

*10) VNA*

Ms. Scheetz said everything is good and they are continuing to partner with the Farmington Valley Health District for the vaccine clinics. They are working on doing a public services announcement campaign and have been on Channel 30 News to make residents aware that they can come to people who are home bound, live in more rural areas, or don't have internet service, to administer the vaccine. She said they are participating in the clinics for the 12–16-year-olds. The latest DPH guidelines have been sent out which clarifies guidelines on wearing masks and Ms. Scheetz said they will continue to wear masks while in the office and out serving the community.

*11) Main Street Partnership*

Ms. Capriola read a comment from Ms. Neilson which asked residence to be patient with business owners as they work through the new masking guidelines and whether they will be requiring patrons to wear them or not.

*12) Other*

Mr. Wilcox asked if it would be possible to bring the Fire Marshall into the Public Safety group to report and participated under the Fire group. He mentioned that in the past Mr. Kowalski was part of the team and had several roles including Fire, Emergency Management and Fire Marshal. He mentioned that things are now split, and it would be good to include the Fire Marshal back into the team and keep the continuity of the Fire Marshal's office with the public safety group. Mr. Peterson and Ms. Capriola said it makes sense and saw no reason to not allow this.

Mr. Massaro said that they have hosted their annual emergency response plan meetings over the past few weeks and have a final session on Monday. They are currently identifying candidates to be brought on as an additional field liaison and will work directly with Public Works to help with opening roads etc. for large scale events. He also mentioned they are in the process of testing their new virtual communications reporting system for priority 2's and 3's. Priority 1's will still go through their dedicate phone line. The release date for the system will be in the Summer and he will share the progress in future meetings.

Mr. Peterson confirmed the next Regular meeting is Thursday, June 17, at 8:00 A.M with no meeting scheduled in July.

The meeting ended at 8:36 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Lynott  
Commission Clerk