

From: Susan Mazurski December 21, 2011 1:38:14 PM  
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Cc:

PUBLIC SAFETY SUBCOMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING - DECEMBER 15, 2011

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. John Hampton, Chairman, called the special meeting of the Public Safety Committee to order on Thursday, December 15th, at 7:05 p.m., in Eno Hall, at 754 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT. The following members were also present: Chief Ingvertsen, Simsbury Police Department, Chief James Baldis, SVFD, Kevin Kowalski, Fire Marshall, Lucille G. Bowman, SVAA, Geoffrey Giddings, Civil Defense, William Ketchabaw, SVFD, Michael Delehanty, SVAA, and Micheline Lecours-Beck, Social Services. Also in attendance were Linda Schofield, State Representative, Mary Glassman, First Selectmen, Lisa Heavner, Board of Selectmen, Nancy Haase, Board of Selectmen, Paul Henault, Board of Finance, Lieutenant Nicholas Boulter, Simsbury Police Department, Lieutenant Fred Sifodaskalakis, Simsbury Police Department, Jim Clifton, WPCA, Richard Matheny, Director of Health for the Farmington Valley Health District, Tom Cooke, Director of Administrative Services, Thomas Roy, Director of Public Works, Burke LaClair, Board of Education and CL&P Representatives.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVE 2012 MEETING CALENDAR

Ms. Bowman made a motion to approve the 2012 Meeting Calendar for the Public Safety Subcommittee, as presented. The motion was seconded by Chief Ingvertsen and passed unanimously.

Mr. Hampton opened the meeting by welcoming the public and described what the Public Safety Subcommittee does and introduced the members. Mr. Hampton commended the Public Safety Officials, volunteers, and debris removal crews for their work during Storm Alfred and through the aftermath. Mr. Hampton introduced Kevin Kowalski to provide the audience with an overview of the storm response overview.

Mr. Kowalski began with a storm response overview. He spoke about the 500+

calls the 911 Call Center received over the first two (2) days. He spoke about the nature of the calls received. Mr. Kowalski said their normal call volume is approximately 60 calls per month. The Town Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Team met immediately to discuss the shelter set-up, which was set up at 8PM that evening. Mr. Kowalski noted that the Shelter was operating for nine (9) days with a total of over 7,300 people checking in for services or aid, 5,960 meals being served and 1,220 people staying overnight. He commended the team comprised of Simsbury personnel and volunteers on the high level of service they provided. Mr. Kowalski outlined the multiple daily meetings of the EOC Team. Mr. Kowalski stated that at the height of the storm, there were up to 38 roads which were completely inaccessible to emergency traffic. He said emergency personnel used extraordinary means to clear those roads in order to respond to calls. Mr. Kowalski said that clearing roads to make them accessible took priority over getting power back. As for the order of getting power back, that was pre-determined by a restoration list, which he overviewed. Mr. Kowalski said we are still in the early stages of the information collection with regards to the after-action report/review. Mr. Kowalski then went over the pre-incident phase and how the Town prepared. He noted that the Red Cross was unavailable after the initial 48-72 hours at the shelter and therefore, Town Staff had to continue on with their volunteers through the ninth (9th) day. He said more personnel would have been needed if another shelter had to be opened. Mr. Kowalski said citizen preparedness could be improved with more information on having a plan in place and also take in consideration a worst-case

scenario with sub-zero temperatures. This, Mr. Kowalski said, would increase shelter population significantly and cause numerous other issues. He noted that additional budgeting for a generator and showers at Tariffville School should be looked at, as it could be possible for the river to obstruct traffic, making it impossible to get to another shelter in town. He said there should be consideration for Tootin Hills generator to be able to run more than just a fire pump and also consideration should be given to increasing generator power at the High School to add addition refrigeration for food storage. Mr. Kowalski again thanked all those who worked throughout the storm.

Mr. Hampton introduced Mary Glassman to address the audience. Ms. Glassman thanked all those who worked before, during and after the storm. Ms. Glassman said that she, Linda Schofield and Mr. Kowalski did testify at the Capitol providing feedback of things that did work and things that did not work. She gave an overview of the topics that need to be addressed and resolved prior to another incident occurring.

Mr. Hampton then introduced Linda Schofield. Representative Schofield again thanked everyone for their work throughout Alfred and commended the

execution of the Storm Plan. She then said there is a lot of attention at the State level and CL&P level on how things can be done better moving forward. Representative Schofield then highlighted some of the recommendations from The Witt Report. She then reiterated that the first public safety priority was getting roads cleared and not the electricity restoration. Representative Schofield did mention the need for a separate shelter for people with more serious physical and mental health issues requiring more medical attention. Lastly, Representative Schofield said she thinks there should be more aggressive tree trimming, but at the same time being mindful of how much we cut.

Mr. Hampton said there is a list of seniors that may need extra attention and noted that Ms. Heavner is working on a program called "Adopt a Senior". Ms. Heavner expanded on this concept. Representative Schofield mentioned the CT Alert System that could help with this matter ([www.ctalert.gov](http://www.ctalert.gov)). Chief Ingvertston said that they are currently registering seniors at the Senior Center, Town Hall and the Library. Mr. Cooke commented that he thinks that, from a communications standpoint, he would put that as the highest priority.

Mr. Hampton then opened the meeting up to public comment.

Robert Kalechman, 971 Hopmeadow Street, addressed the board and said the utilities system is antiquated and will end up costing us millions of dollars. Mr. Kalechman stressed that any communication system installed would need a power source and said he thinks the State is behind with regards to the latest technology. He said we need to look to the military for the latest systems. Mr. Kalechman said Simsbury citizens need to demand more from our civil public servants and that it is alright to spend money in order to have the best services. Mr. Kalechman said he thought Public Works was late in getting on top of the storm, operating plows with a skeleton crew. Mr. Kalechman said not everyone can afford a generator, so don't forget those people. Mr. Roy responded by saying that all of their crew were ready and available on Friday before anyone left for the weekend with all available crews on call. Mr. Kalechman asked about chainsaws in the plows and Mr. Roy said they proactively brought all available chainsaws out and put them in the trucks. Mr. Kalechman also said that CL&P did not have enough people and the State was not prepared. In closing, Mr. Kalechman said Social Services does a good job serving the elderly, but while they are talking about coming up with a plan, they recently laid-off a Social Services employee, which Mr. Hampton replied by saying they did not lay-off anyone in social services. Mr. Cooke confirmed that no one from Social Services has been laid-off.

Diane Phillips, Hickory Hill Road, said their electricity was out for

eleven (11) days. Diane read her notes that she made at the time of the outage. She said on the first day she could not walk out easily due to the snow piles from the plows, causing her to be stuck in the house initially. Ms. Phillips said this stressed the importance of preparation. She listed the important preparations she made. She asked about what should be in a first aid kit as well as potential dangers of downed lines, even when power is out. She also asked about what phone numbers she should have on hand for the future and how to get information about emergency shelters. Ms. Phillips asked about generator safety and how she could get more education on that subject. Ms. Phillips asked about the potential of using Boy Scouts going door to door to check in with the public. In closing, she said she was proud to be a citizen of Simsbury. Mr. Hampton thanked Ms. Phillips and said that it is so important to citizens be prepared. Mr. Kowalski said "Are you Ready?" is a book, published by FEMA, that will answer a lot of the questions Ms. Phillips raised. The book can be found at the Library and Town Hall and is free of charge. Mr. Kowalski described the Meals Ready To Eat (MRE) that were on hand and available through the shelter system. Mr. Kowalski the Primary Shelter is Simsbury High School and the Secondary Shelter is Squadron Line School. Mr. Kowalski said with regards to the idea of Boy Scouts, it was not a safe environment, with all of the downed trees and lines, for young adults to be out going door to door. He said even though lines are dead, there could be back-fed power from a generator, which can be dangerous.

Mr. Hampton then thanked the Ladies Auxiliary, saying their services were invaluable.

Rob Boutasse, 29 Riverside Road, began by thanking everyone for the service throughout Irene and Alfred, saying their visibility was reassuring to the public. He said that he is glad to hear they are considering a generator at Tariffville School, and urged them to do so, because they could be easily isolated over there due to flooding.

Sue Bednarczyk, 119 E. Weatogue Street, said, as she mentioned to the Board of Selectmen, she has an elderly mother and she called the routine number at the police station at the very early stages of the storm and could not get information regarding the shelter. Ms. Bednarczyk wondered if there could be an incubator area for those who need it prior to the shelter being open. She said she felt scared and she had no where to go, luckily a neighbor invited them to come over, but without that, she would not have known what to do. Chief Ingvertsen said the Town Hall is available until the shelter opens up and some people did go there who had been stranded on the road.

Shannon Knall, 14 David Drive, said she is a parent of a child with autism and is Connecticut's Advocacy Chairperson for Autism Speaks. She wanted to

thank the Board with their willingness to work with those with intellectual disabilities at the shelter. Ms. Knall said Autism Speaks has a Crisis Intervention Kit that teaches people how to deal with individuals with intellectual disabilities in a time of crisis. She also offered herself as a resource going forward with this process.

Carmin J. Centrella, 26 Arrowhead Drive, West Simsbury, said he spent most of the week at a Regional Coordination Center, and he is concerned Simsbury will look within itself with regards to shelter medical needs and the liability that comes along with that. He said the issues will get worse as the population ages and people stay home longer on their own. Mr. Centrella said he thinks there are solutions that are being addressed at a State or Regional level that could be helpful. Mr. Kowalski said he understands Mr. Centrella's comments and while there was discussion of Shelter Regionalization, that did not work due to the length of travel it would take to get to a shelter. He also said that bureaucracy and paperwork has been the biggest hold up in getting people attended to in these types of situations. The Declaration of Emergency was discussed and waivers that come along with that.

It was noted from a member of the public that D Batteries were of the utmost importance to have, as they can run a radio and once the storm comes, they become scarce.

Sue Bednarczyk, 119 E. Weatogue Street, again asked about how gas stations could get back up and running faster. Mr. Kowalski described what is involved in getting pumps functioning with the interconnected systems that are currently in place. He said it is a top priority. Mr. Kowalski again stressed the importance of self-preparedness. With 23,000 people in town, you have to be careful and prepare as well as possible.

Mr. Hampton then closed the public portion of the meeting.

Sherri Winslow, Division Director, CL&P, thanked the Board for having them at the meeting and described the ongoing dialogue with the Town Staff and community as they work hard to learn how things can be improved.

Chief Baldis said there are lessons to be learned; (1) communication levels in the Town of Simsbury were extraordinary and we are fortunate for the resources we have and (2) this event was historic in nature and we made it through without a fatality or a serious injury, which is incredible for a town this size and with the tree damage we had.

Mr. Hampton said the Committee will get together on January 19th to debrief and continue with this process.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Giddings made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:35PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kowalski and passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mr. John Hampton, Chairman  
Clerk

Leslie U. Faraci,