

Public Safety Subcommittee
TOWN OF SIMSBURY, CONNECTICUT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 19, 2023 at 8:00 A.M.
Main Meeting Room, Town Hall

Mr. Askham called the Regular Meeting of the Public Safety Subcommittee to order at 8:00 A.M.

Present were:

Sean Askham, Selectman; **James Baldis**, Chief, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Department; **Chris Davis**, Deputy Chief of Police; **Kristen Formanek**, Director of Community & Social Services; **Tom Fitzgerald**, Acting Deputy Town Manager; **Jennifer Kertanis**, Farmington Valley Health District; **Lee Erdmann**, Interim Town Manager; **Mike Long**, Police Commissioner; **Wendy Mackstutis**, First Selectman; **Mark Massaro**, Community Relations & Economic Development Specialist, Eversource; **Sarah Nielsen**, Simsbury Main Street Partnership; **Chris Peterson**, Selectman; **Tom Roy**, Director of Public Works; **Nancy Scheetz**, CEO Visiting Nurses Association; **Karin Stewart**, Executive Director, Simsbury Volunteer Ambulance Association; **Neil Sullivan**, Director of Personnel, Simsbury Schools; **Patrick Tourville**, Fire Marshall and **Gary Wilcox**, President, Simsbury Fire District; **Dyanne Hanelius**, Rehabilitation Manager, VNHLC

Pledge of Allegiance

All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Housekeeping Items:

Approval of Minutes

Minutes approved by consensus.

Updates:

1) Farmington Valley Health District

Ms. Kertanis stated it is respiratory illness season and reminded people to get their flu shots as well as covid vaccine. Ms. Kertanis also said that covid tests were available from the federal government for anyone to request them. Ms. Kertanis informed the group of the community health update and the FVHD's focus on mental health.

2) Town Manager's Office

Mr. Erdmann provided an update on the report that the Town Manager's Office is conducting in partnership with the SVAA. He also gave an update on the Town Manager recruitment.

3) Emergency Management

Mr. Askham read an update from Mr. Berry that focused on flu shots, the weather the Town has seen this year and reminding residents to pay attention to WSIM for emergency updates.

4) Police

Deputy Chief Davis provided an update on the current trends the Police department is seeing

regarding stolen vehicles and recent accidents. Mr. Long provided an update on the recruitment process for new officers and how lengthy the process is. Mr. Wilcox asked a question about debris left over in the roads after accidents, Mr. Davis stated that the responsibility is on the tow truck crew to remove debris and that he will follow up with his officers on this.

5) Ambulance

Ms. Stewart gave more information on the report being prepared with the Town Manager's Office. The SVAA received a grant for 3 pieces of equipment. Ms. Stewart gave a review of the year to date numbers for the SVAA.

6) Fire

Mr. Wilcox informed the group about the new permit fee that became effective on 10/1 for Fire Marshal review of plans. Mr. Tourville informed the group that it is Fire Prevention week and touched on some of the items that he is doing in the community including visiting the 1st and 2nd grade classrooms to spread the word. Mr. Baldis gave an update on items the Fire District, SVAA and the Police Department were working together on. Mr. Baldis also mentioned that there have been some instances of basketball hoops overhanging into the streets and fire apparatus hitting them when driving. He reminded residents that these should not overhang into the streets. There was a discussion on recent water over the road incidents and residents ignoring the road closed signs and then getting stuck. The group asked about a potential ordinance that could impose a fine for anyone who does this.

7) Board of Education

Mr. Sullivan thanked Officer Kushman for his service as the SRO and congratulated him on his recent promotion. He thanked the Police department for a quick succession planning between the old SRO and the new SRO to help keep the students safe. Mr. Sullivan gave an update on the Latimer Lane project and that schools will be closed on election day. Mr. Sullivan also said that they will be trialing new and improved cameras on some buses before rolling out new cameras to all buses in the fleet.

8) Public Works and Engineering

Mr. Roy spoke about a recent OSHA visit and how there were things we got complimented on and others that we will need to improve. Mr. Roy also mentioned the engineering department is doing a review of intersections for safety and potential improvements so that when grant funding comes available the Town has plans and ideas ready to go.

9) Social Services

Ms. Formanek spoke about the Steps to Safety program and how it is ready to be launched. Ms. Formanek also talked about the work the department is doing with the FVHD for opioid settlement money both for Simsbury and the region. Ms. Formanek also touched on updates about the Fair Rent Commission.

10) VNA

Ms. Scheetz reported that the VNA has merged with the Visiting Nurse & Hospice of Litchfield County, a larger organization of similar values. The VNA will still work with the same name and community partners, and residents should not expect a change in quality of service. She said she will miss working with the group but it was what was best for the VNA and the towns.

11) Main Street Partnership

Ms. Nielsen provided an update on the business community. She stated that they have seen choking incidents in restaurants. Ms. Nielsen said that it is coming up on the fourth quarter and this is when they typically see an increase in shoplifting, she asked for everyone to be on the lookout and has contacted the Police department to see if an increase in patrols can be done to help deter. Ms. Nielsen mentioned that the Medical Equipment Loan Locker is a fantastic resource and the group should advertise it more to the residents.

12) Eversource

Mr. Massaro reported on monthly training Eversource is doing in preparing for the winter season. He said beginning on December 1st there is a new program for low income customers to help with electric bills.

13) Other

Ms. Mackstutis thanked Mr. Kowalski for his years of service to Simsbury and Mr. Peterson and Mr. Askham for their time on the Public Safety Sub-Committee.

Mr. Peterson said that from his time in other communities it is groups like the Public Safety Sub-Committee that separates Simsbury and makes it above others. He thanked the group for their desire to work together for the benefit of the community.

Mr. Askham thanked the group for his time over the past 12 years, he said this group was one of the proudest things about his time serving as a member of the Board of Selectmen and he knows that Simsbury is in a good place with the members at this table looking out for them.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Fitzgerald
Acting Deputy Town Manager