

**CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 13, 2010**

ATTENDANCE: Richard A. Moccia, Mayor; Dennis McCarthy, Fire Chief, Norwalk Fire Department; Lieutenant Resnick, Norwalk Police Department; Hal Alvord, Department of Public Works;

OTHERS:

Karen DelVecchio, IT Dept.; Tad Diesel, Mayor's Office; Bill Mooney, Norwalk H.D., Louis Schulman, Norwalk Transit; Adam Bovilsky, Human Relations Department; David Kennedy, United Way; Betty Karkut, Human Services Council; Jennifer Lord, Norwalk Hospital; Christi Pope, Christian Community Action;

Call to Order

Fire Chief McCarthy called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m.

Emergency Management Update

December 22, 2009 Ohio Ave. Explosion

Chief McCarthy provided an update on the explosion fire that occurred on December 22, 2009 and completely destroyed the house on Ohio Avenue I Norwalk. He commended the rescue efforts and involvement of Ms. Deluca as she and many others worked through the night to assist with providing relief for the family and neighbors involved. He added that Yankee Gas responded quickly to shut off gas throughout the area and are providing weekly updates with testing to provide safety assurance for the neighborhood.

Mayor Moccia added that Yankee Gas plans to replace old gas lines throughout the City, and Mr. Alvord commented that many lines are dated from the 1920's and leaks occur even where there is no gas service as the gas follows the water lines.

Chief McCarthy added that the outpouring of aid to the family from local businesses was very generous. He added that there was a recent ceremony where Senator Duff presented contributions to the Fire Victims' Fund that included a \$2,000 donation from AT&T. He added that there was a great deal of learning that occurs through situations like this, and he thanked the press in becoming an ally to the Fire Department with providing updates for the community.

Vulnerable Populations and Disaster Roundtable-January 26

Ms. Deluca distributed a flyer on a FREE program titled, “Social Service Roundtable Disaster Planning for Vulnerable Populations” scheduled for Tuesday, January 25 from 9 a.m. to noon at St. Matthews Church. She added that members of the City Departments and Community leaders will be there to discuss the plans for emergency preparedness and disaster communication systems. She added that participation by key members of the community will assist the City in its planning efforts and will help develop partnerships with non-profit organization to maximize the capabilities and the effectiveness of the emergency preparedness plan.

Chief McCarthy commented that throughout the recent house explosion on Ohio Avenue, was a realization of the need for a comprehensive approach of Emergency Preparedness, and there was actually a customer service post-disaster approach coordinated by Ms. Deluca.

Traffic/Construction Update – DPW

Mr. Alvord stated that the Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works met with the objective to coordinate amongst the various departments and there are no eminent critical closures at this time. Mr. Alvord added that there are weekly meetings that include traffic plan updates on detours, DOT bridge closures, and that an e-mail distribution list has been created to enhance the communications system. Mr. Alvord added that there is a 24-hour crew that changes weekly and they are updated with contact information for downed trees, flooding, and contractor contacts for situations such as steel road plate covers, etc. He added that these important details are communicated in weekly post-construction progress update meetings, and Chief McCarthy stated that to include ambulance services and the Norwalk Transit Authority for all communication systems.

Haiti Earthquake Update

Mr. Gerry Azor, President United Haitian Americans, introduced guests and representatives from the Haitian Consulate, and thanked everyone for their support and for the opportunity to attend this meeting. He stated that the situation was very critical and they have spent the last 24 hours gathering information and thanked the Mayor for the use of the City Hall room that has been dedicated to the Haitian Community during this crisis.

Mr. Azor stated that the full extent of damage is unknown, however, they have immediate needs for water, medical services and support. He added that many Norwalk residents are waiting to hear from family members and that this is a most devastating situation, where Port Au Prince has no building codes and “shanty towns” have been the most affected. He added that there are no bulldozers, and organizations such as Doctors without Borders and the Army Corps of Engineers have not yet been able to be reached as there is no communications means at this time.

Mr. Azor reported that bank accounts have been set up with the local banks where people can make donations, and Ms. Deluca added that all information has been posted on the City's website. She provided a flyer of information that included a Text to Help program whereby texting 90999 a \$10.000 donation will be sent to the Red Cross to help with relief efforts, and the donation will be charged on the customer's mobile phone bill.

Mr. Azor added that the organization is looking for donations of water, medical supplies and for medical professionals to go and assist with the relief efforts. He added that Jet Blue and American Airlines have offered to fly nurses and doctors free and the Army Corps of Engineers are re-building a run-way at the Port Au Prince airport.

Chief McCarthy suggested that rather than supplies, money would be the most beneficial as storage and transportation issues for supplies can become a difficult problem to manage. Mr. Kennedy asked is there was an address for Fairfield County residents to send a donation and Mr. Azor gave the following:

United Haitian American Society
304 Main Street, P.O. Box 414
Norwalk, CT 06851

Lt. Resnick added that the Americares organization in Stamford is setting up for donation collections and transport, and Mayor Moccia added that in situations like these, "cash is king." Ms. Deluca stated that there is an international website to assist relatives in locating family members and that is set up through the American Red Cross, where they create family links for international disasters like this. She listed that people trying to locate U.S. citizens should contact the U.S. Department of State at 1-888-407-4747 .

Winter Preparedness Discussion

Shelter Overflow

Chief McCarthy stated that they had received a 211 call reporting that an individual had been forced to leave the shelter, and Ms. Karkut responded that she was not aware of an over capacity situation. She added that the Shelter is full, but they have not turned anyone away during the night, but not until 7:00 a.m. She added that some shelter residents go to the Libraries or other community areas to look for employment or housing needs. Mayor Moccia stated that he suspects that non-Norwalk residents are looking to use the Norwalk Shelter during the recent cold spell. Ms. Pope with Christian Community Action responded that there is a day drop-in program and they receive referrals for Norwalk on an on-going basis.

Outreach-How to better educate clients

Ms. Karkut reported that outreach to the area churches and organizations is an on-going effort to provide information on services available to residents seeking emergency shelter during these difficult economic times. Ms. Karkut stated she was looking forward to the Social Service Roundtable on January 26 and added that this was an important step with community outreach.

New Items for Discussion

Ms. Deluca stated that the next meeting will be Wednesday, February 10, 2010 in room 231.

There were no new items for discussion.

Mayor Moccia thanked the members for the combined efforts in working together for the city's emergency preparedness efforts.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MAYOR MOCCIA MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MR. DIESEL SECONDED
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Knox
Telesco Secretarial Services