

CITY OF NORWALK
PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 8, 2012

ATTENDANCE:

Hal Alvord, Department of Public Works; Karen Delvecchio, IT Dept.;
Karen Del Vecchio, Director of Information & Technology
Louis Schulman, Norwalk Transit; Jennifer Lord, Norwalk Hospital;
Adam Bovilsky, Human Relations Department,
Mark Gorian, Director, Norwalk Public Schools Facilities
Steven Woods, Nazacha Ramos, American Red Cross;
Kras Carlucci, Norwalk Housing Authority
Tad Diesel, Mayor's Office

STAFF:

Dennis McCarthy, Fire Chief, Norwalk Fire Department;
Michelle DeLuca, Director, Emergency Management.

OTHER:

Dominic Scerbo, Rich Walsh, CL&P

Call to Order

Fire Chief McCarthy called the meeting to order at 3:35 p.m. and asked those in attendance to state their name and to give their affiliation.

Emergency Management Update

Chief McCarthy stated that the primary objective was to review and discuss the CT2 Storm Panel Report, and he asked members from CL&P to comment. Mr. Walsh referred to the summary recommendations report that was presented and stated that one of the key areas was a change to the incremental response levels to identify the number of resident power outages as defined in previous levels 3, 4, 5 to Level 3 100,000 -Level 4: 500,000-Level 5 up to 1million

Mr. Walsh reviewed other recommendations from the report and stated that circuit maps are also critical in reporting and locating outages. He added that Map Star system is being installed in all CL&P vehicles and this should be an important improvement with technology with power recovery. Chief McCarthy asked when this will be completed, and Mr. Walsh replied that they are hoping to provide information to the Mayor the end of March with project completion by the end of June.

Chief McCarthy asked Ms. DelVecchio if the IT Department had input, and she replied that they recently had a stakeholders meeting regarding systems and the mapping technology. She stated that customer service mapping system is nearly complete. She explained that the latitude and longitude can be dropped in to capture outages and provide reports with electronic mapping with frequent updates.

Mr. Walsh reviewed the major chapters and highlighted excerpts from the 82 recommendations
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as follows: State Response to the Two Storms: Assessing Risk: The Impact of Climate Change, The Rise of Sea Levels. Utility Issues: Preparedness, Tree Trimming Infrastructure Hardening, General Communications and the Sharing of Information between Utilities and Municipalities Establishing Mutual Priorities/Sharing Information: Regular Stakeholder Meetings, Training Municipal Issues: Preparedness, Training, Road Safety/Downed Tree Removal, Shelter Operations, Utilization of Volunteers, Use of Geographical Information Systems, Health Care and Community Provider Issues, Establishing Mutual Priorities/Sharing Information: Regular Stakeholder Meetings, Training, General State Issues – Regulation of Utilities, Statewide Communications, Review of DESPP, Strengthening the Interaction between the State and the Community.

Mr. Alvord stated that overall he was disappointed in the report after the hours of time spent testifying and stated that there continues to be a lack of understanding and willingness to accurately report the recommendations from the state. He stated the situation of coming within one foot of overflow from the Waste Water Treatment Plant, and explained that pouring raw sewage into the sound was not a desired outcome, but there is no alternative. He added that with rising sea levels this could result in costs in millions of dollars from the clean water fund, and that the DEP needs to put incentives to protect the waters with regulations and requirements. Mr. Alvord added that there needs to be better dealing with logistics such as generator requirements because if there is a category 3 storm, there is no back-up generator system and City Hall will come to a screeching halt. He added that DPW will have no access to fuel or water and his trucks will not be operational, and this is a critical logistical concern that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Schulman asked about the limit of hours for the crew and Mr. Walsh replied that overtime exhaustion is counter productive. He reviewed the practice where workers were pushed to work up to 16 hours for ten days and revised worker safety guidelines now limit the number of hours. Mr. Alvord stated that we wanted to echo that comment as it is the same for DPW where some studies show that safety is compromised and productivity is decreased and it is a poor business practice to have those overtime excess hours over the limit.

Mr. Walsh added that the operational logistics need to be worked out and he agrees with Mr. Alvord's comments that the number of crews is the critical challenge. He added that directional guidance by certification is key and the "hopscotch" approach in Norwalk presented a great team approach where road could be cleared and ready for CL&P the crew. Mr. Alvord added in some cases his workers needed CL&P there to ensure that wires were cold before they cleared and the system needs to be ironed out as to what comes first.

Mr. Walsh described a new enhanced tree trimming program and provided photos that show the desired benefit of open blue sky with infrastructure trimming around power lines. There was a discussion about environmental issues and Mr. Alvord added that there are trade-offs where environmental concerns have to be balanced with optimal safety objectives.

Mr. Walsh added that they are committed to establishing a "Town Center" approach is one of the recommendations to create an optimal City location where wire can be buried that serves as a central emergency location that has access to gas, food and shelter.

Chief McCarthy asked if any members had comments and additional input and Mr. Woods stated that from the Red Cross purview the issue of functional access to full care and shelter is a key element. He added that the validity of alternative care for the medically fragile needs to be established with and the availability of nurses or health care aides. He stated that he agreed with the generator power issue and explained that full generator capacity needs to be established as limited power does not work with outlets and that is essential in the emergency shelter.

Mr. Bovilsky stated that for the disabled community, they are addressing the goal of how to keep people in their own homes rather than shelter due to issues of transportation and medications. He added that there will be a meeting with the Health Department on these related subjects and they hope to address how to best create a data base identify needs ice, oxygen, transportation.

Ms. Lord replied that from the Norwalk Hospital perspective, during these emergency situations, hospitals need the ability to identify the safety of patient discharge to homes where power has been restored. She added that there are also situations that medically fragile need special care, but should not be sent to the hospital.

Chief McCarthy mentioned that when for-profit services are used, they need to have an emergency plan of their own and not rely on the City for emergency assistance as it relates to oxygen deliveries, etc.

Chief McCarthy replied that they continue to chip away at these health care issues and public risks of admitting special situations, such as infectious disease patients that could jeopardize the public health conditions of the emergency shelter.

Mr. Walsh concluded by thanking the committee for the collaborative efforts and noted that cooperation with best practices is really key with putting the recommendations into effect.

Mr. Alvord stated that the relationship with Northrup Grumman needs to be cultivated for future DPW evacuations, and that they were very cooperative with handling of the facilities.

DPW: Mr. Alvord stated that as a result of the relationship cultivated after the March 2010 Nor-Easter storm and lessons learned helped with having CL&P providing improved service that helped the City fair better than other towns. He added that along with Parks & Recreation teaming up the DPW, they have now added Code Enforcement in the mix with cooperative efforts to work together with repairs and permits, etc. He added that fortunately things like this provided a real-situation drill that provided a test of the plan, which is critical with plan preparedness. Chief McCarthy replied that it is situations like these that provide lessons learned to make further modifications to the response plan.

Mr. Alvord noted that the evacuation of the DPW to Norden Park was handled with exceptional effectiveness and efficiency by his crew and the Northrop Grumman firm was very cooperative and provided indoor facilities. He added that future such evacuations should include more coverage of outside facilities, and that this is the type of relationship with community stakeholders that needs to be cultivated.

Norwalk Transit Department: Mr. Schulman, Norwalk Transit stated that they have a few new Public Safety Committee

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things in place, but they were mostly internal.

Norwalk Public Schools: Mr. Gorian stated that there was nothing new to report and that the schools are coordinating safety drills such as lock downs.

Norwalk Police Department:

Lt. Resnick stated that the Police Departments has been very busy lately with recent incidents. He added they are working on upgrades to the radio systems and hope to have the radio spectrum system operational by December 31, 2012.

Red Cross: Mr. Woods stated that they are reviewing their shelter operations statewide for a mass evacuation regional plan of strategic centers. He added that these locations move as the storm track moves and areas recover to support the fully functioning centers.

Hospital: Ms. Lord stated that they are in the process of reviewing their emergency evacuation plans and one request is to evaluate and remove dormant radio equipment. She explained that this request comes from ham radio operators to clean up wires as they improve the effectiveness of the towers.

Human Relations: Mr. Bovilsky stated that regarding the situations that relate to the City's Homeless Prevention Plan, they are working on places for homeless residents to go during the day. Ms. DeLuca replied that pre-disaster homeless should remain in the open door shelter as opposed to the Emergency Shelter. Lt. Resnick added that the public libraries have been able to accommodate shelter residents to use the computers during the day. Mr. Bovilsky asked if they can accommodate an increase to this practice during emergency operations, and Ms. Deluca replied that the Librarians have been very helpful in providing a resource center to the Emergency Operations Center.

Norwalk Housing Authority: Ms. Carlucci stated that the NHA needs a plan and gave an example of a recent transformer outage that left them scrambling for things like transportation for handicapped residents. Chief McCarthy replied that early notification is key, because with this incident they were only notified later in the evening and it slowed down their response capability. He added that without a Social Services Coordinator, the Fire Department has to rely on reports from the sources of situations such as this.

Mr. Diesel asked about the Town Center plan and stated that the Mayor is very interested in seeing this when a plan becomes available.

New Items for discussion

Chief McCarthy noted that they have the annual Hurricane Season program coming up in June and asked the members to provide him with any suggestions at the next meeting.

Safety Saturdays: Chief McCarthy stated that in an effort to heighten awareness of fire safety in response to recent fatalities and near fatal fire and in particular the tragedy in Stamford, they have come up with "Safety Saturdays". He distributed copies of the campaign, and reviewed the highlights stating the goal is to provide targeted safety messages to residents throughout the City to reinforce the need for improved habits in the wake of fires with common causes. He provided

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an outline of the program as follows:

These programs would be community based and we would bring our programs to the different areas within the City rather than have residents come to one central location (Open House).

Timing: Late Winter/ early Spring: One every other week for 8 weeks.

Locations: 4 sites will be selected in areas that are busy/ well- trafficked on the weekend.

- District A: Main Library (Alternate- Kendall School)
- District B: Vets Park (Alt- Columbus) — permits may be needed
- District C: Vets Park (Alt- Nathan Hale)
- District D: Main Ave Wal-Mart (Alt West Rocks)
- District E: CT Ave Stop and Shop (Alt Brookside)

Messages:

- Kitchen cooking safety (Put a lid on it —Mass Campaign w/ Chef)
- Fireplace Ashes - Fire progression video - Smoking (USFA campaign)
- EDITH - Smoke Detectors - CO Detectors - Candles (Candle w/ care)
- Renters Insurance - EM Safety Kit (Grab and Go Bag)

Resources needed include: Smokes trailer, Tables, Fire Truck- w/ ff gear

- Handouts, coloring books, door hangers

Chief McCarthy added that the door hangers would be distributed to the schools for back-packs and Mr. Schulman requested 150 for door displays on the Wheels buses.

Ms. Deluca noted the following upcoming state programs:

March- 5 Citizen Corps Conference

May – The CCM Conference in Cromwell -

Next meeting: Wednesday, March 14, City Hall Room 231. Chief McCarthy noted that unless there is a significant agenda of meaningful items for discussion, they do not intend to hold meetings in consideration of everyone's busy schedule.

There were no other items for discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Knox,

Telesco Secretarial Services