

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FIRE &
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Jointly with

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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September 8, 2020
Start: 10:11 a.m.
Recess: 11:52 a.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 1)

B E F O R E: Joseph C. Borelli
Chairperson

Robert F. Holden
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Justin L. Brannan
Fernando Cabrera
Chaim M. Deutsch
Alan N. Maisel
Costa G. Constantinides
Peter A. Koo
Brad S. Lander
Eric A. Ulrich
Paul A. Vallone
Kalman Yeger

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Richard Napolitano
NYPD Deputy Chief

Jessica Tisch
DoITT Commissioner

Jon Paul Augier
FDNY Deputy Commissioner

Michael Clarke
NYPD Managing Attorney for Legislative Affairs

Joe Morrisroe
DoITT Director of 311

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WITH
2 COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Recording has started.

4 UNIDENTIFIED: [inaudible] recording.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Sergeant
6 Beondo [sp?]. You may begin with your opening
7 statement.

8 UNIDENTIFIED: Good morning all and
9 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing on
10 the Committees of Fire and Emergency Management
11 jointly with Technology. At this time, would all
12 panelists please turn on their video. Once again,
13 all panelists please turn on your videos. To
14 minimize disruption, we ask everyone to please place
15 electronic devices on vibrate or silent mode. If you
16 wish to submit testimony, you may do so at
17 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Again, that is
18 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your
19 corporation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

20 [gavel]

21 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Sorry if that was
22 loud. The notes say make sure it's audible, so I
23 did. Thanks for joining this virtual hearing for
24 today's Committee on Fire and Emergency Management
25 and Technology. Today the committees will be
examining the City's 911 and 311 responses during

1 last months' Tropical Storm Isaias. Additionally,
2 the Committee on Technology will be hearing
3 Introduction number 1755 sponsored by my friend and
4 colleague Chair Holden. I want to point out all the
5 Council Members who have so far joined. Including
6 Chair Holden, that would be Council Members Koo,
7 Council Members Maisel, Cabrera, Council Member
8 Vallone, Brannan, Yeger, and I believe that's it.
9 Please forgive me if I've missed anyone. The counsel
10 will tell me. Emergency services including those
11 provided by the NYPD and EMS are amongst the most
12 critical services provided by the City. On a daily
13 basis New Yorkers rely on connecting to emergency
14 dispatchers when faced with a medical emergency, a
15 fire or a public safety threat. These often times
16 life or death situations can be impacted by a few
17 minutes or even seconds of delay in the response.
18 Unfortunately, on August 4th the City was being
19 thrashed by Tropical Storm Isaias, and hundreds of
20 thousands of New Yorkers were without power. Calls
21 to our 911 system went unanswered. Although the
22 Administration has conceded that there were temporary
23 delays in answering emergency calls, there has been
24 no public explanation for the cause of these delays,
25

1
2 no clarity on the scope of these issues, or impact on
3 the public, and no assurances, most importantly, from
4 the Administration that they are working to address
5 this issue. At this hearing today, we hope to
6 receive a full picture of the happenings during
7 Tropical Storm Isaias and what the City is doing to
8 ensure that never again happens in a time of crisis.
9 I would now like to turn it over to Chair Holden, the
10 Chair of the Committee on Technology to give his
11 opening statement.

12 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you Councilman
13 Borelli, and good morning. I am Council Member
14 Robert Holden, Chair of the Committee on Technology.
15 I would like to welcome you all to our hearing. I am
16 pleased to join the Committee on Fire and Emergency
17 Management chaired by my good friend Council Member
18 Joe Borelli of the great borough of Staten Island.
19 Today, we'll be focusing on the challenges faced by
20 New York City's 311 and 911 systems during Tropical
21 Storm Isaias. I will look to gain a better
22 understanding of how these systems can be approved
23 upon for the future. We will also be hearing Intro.
24 1755 regarding an assessment of the 311 service
25 request intake map. Intro. 1755, of which I'm a

1 sponsor, would require the Department Of
2 Informational Technology and Telecommunications to
3 conduct an assessment of the interactive map
4 accessible through the 311 website or mobile device
5 application that is used for the intake of 311
6 service request and complaints. In order to determine
7 the feasibility of improving the location accuracy of
8 the 311 intake map, the department would also require
9 to submit a report of the results of the assessment
10 to the Council. The 311 and 911 systems of New York
11 City are the largest in the country, yielding the
12 highest call volume per year as well as servicing the
13 most people. However, Tropical Storm Isaias has made
14 it clear that our calls system still have a long way
15 to go to sufficiently serve our communities when we
16 need them most. During the storm, many New Yorkers
17 trying to call 911 were met with an answering service
18 and were unable to reach a live operator.
19
20 Unfortunately, this was not the first time that this
21 happened this year. The 911 system's lack of capacity
22 to handle high call volume was also highlighted
23 during the height of the Coronavirus pandemic, as the
24 Fire Department of New York had to put calls on hold
25 because of the high call volume. Additionally, many

1 New Yorkers spent hours reporting the damage brought
2 by Tropical Storm Isaias to 311, as 311 received
3 thousands of call during the height of the storm, but
4 many have found the responsiveness capabilities of
5 311 to be inadequate. One family in Queens, for
6 instance, had to wait an entire week for a fallen
7 tree to be removed from their home and repeated calls
8 to 311, the Fire Department, Parks Department yielded
9 no results. Crucially, this family was not able to
10 report the severity of the situation as their service
11 request did not have the ability to show that the
12 tree had come through their roof. So, our 911 and
13 311 systems are critical for the safety and well-
14 being of our city's' residents and is important to
15 make sure that these systems are always ready and up
16 to the task. We look forward to better understanding
17 the challenges that we're facing in 311 and 911
18 systems during Tropical Storm Isaias, as well as
19 understanding how the city can better serve its
20 residents with its 311 and 911 systems. We wish to
21 work together with the Administration on this
22 important issue. We look forward to hearing the
23 valuable testimonies from the Administration,
24 experts, community advocates, and alike, and this
25

1 testimony will provide crucial insight on the
2 problems that currently exist and will provide
3 crucial insight on the problems that currently exist
4 and will provide important groundwork for future
5 solutions. I'd like to also thank our Technology
6 Committee, Irene Bahavski [sp?] and Charles Kim
7 [sp?], and the Fire Management Committee staff Joshua
8 Kingsley, William Hoggish [sp?] for their hard work
9 in preparing for this hearing. I will now turn back
10 to my Co-Chair, Council Member Borelli.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you, the
13 right honorable person from Queens. I just want to
14 actually turn it to Committee Counsel Josh Kingsley
15 to go over these procedural items that must be said
16 before we hear from the Administration.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks so much Chair
18 Borelli. Good morning everyone, I'm Josh Kingsley,
19 Counsel to the Fire and Emergency Management
20 Committee. Before we begin testimony I want to
21 remind everyone that you will be on mute until you
22 are called to testify. Afterwards, you will be
23 unmuted by the host. I will be calling up panelists
24 to testify. Please listen for your name to be called.
25 I will be periodically announcing who is the next

1 panelist. The first panelist will be giving
2 testimony from representatives of the New York City
3 Police Department and the New York City Department of
4 Information Technology, and Telecommunications. For
5 the NYPD, testimony will be provided by Deputy Chief
6 Richard Napolitano. From DoITT, testimony will be
7 provided by Commissioner Jessica Tisch.
8 Additionally, the following representatives will be
9 available for answering questions: from the Fire
10 Department Deputy Commissioner Jon Paul Augier, and
11 from NYPD, Managing Attorney of Legislative Affairs,
12 Michael Clarke, and from DoITT, the Director of 311,
13 Joe Morrisroe. I will call on you when it's your
14 turn to speak during the hearing. If Council Members
15 would like to ask any questions of the Administration
16 or a specific panelist, please use the Zoom raise
17 hand function and I will call you in that order. All
18 hearing participants should submit written testimony
19 to testimony@council.nyc.gov. We will now call
20 representatives of the Administration to testify.
21 Before we begin I will administer the oath.
22 Commissioner Tisch, Deputy Chief Napolitano, Deputy
23 Commissioner Augier, Mr. Clarke, and Mr. Morrisroe, I
24 will call on each of you individually for response.
25

COMMITTEE ON FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WITH
COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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1 Please raise your right hand and affirm the following
2 oath: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
3 truth and nothing but the truth before these
4 committees and to respond honestly to Council Member
5 questions?
6

7 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I will begin with
9 Commissioner Tisch.

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I do.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner
12 Napolitano?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NAPOLITANO: I do.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Commissioner
15 Augier?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I do.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Clarke?

18 MICHAEL CLARKE: I do.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Mr. Morrisroe?

20 JOE MORRISROE: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you everyone,
22 and you can begin when you are ready.

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Good morning Chairs
24 Holden and Borelli and members of the Committees on
25 Technology and Fire and Emergency Management. My

1 name is Jessica Tisch, and I am the Commissioner of
2 the New York City Department of Information
3 Technology and Telecommunications, DoITT, and the
4 Citywide Chief Information Officer. As Commissioner
5 of DoITT, I oversee the largest municipal IT
6 organization in the country. In this role, I am
7 responsible for many of the City's critical systems,
8 chief among them, 911 and 311. Additionally, at the
9 height of the pandemic, Mayor de Blasio tasked me
10 with overseeing and turning around 311 operations,
11 which was both an honor and a privilege, for two main
12 reasons: Because 311 is an absolute gem - the
13 connective tissue between New Yorkers and nearly
14 every local government service; and the centralized
15 depot for information about City programs, and
16 because optimizing call center operations happens to
17 be a passion of mine, which I came to somewhat late
18 in life, in my former job as Deputy Commissioner at
19 the NYPD overseeing 911 operations. The thing I miss
20 most about that job is working with the City's Police
21 Communications Technicians, who literally serve as a
22 lifeline for New Yorkers in need. With that context,
23 I want to thank you for the opportunity to discuss
24 the 311 call center response to Isaias, as well as
25

1 the performance, from a technology perspective, of
2 the 911 system during the Tropical Storm. My
3 colleagues from the NYPD will address 911 operations
4 on the day of the storm. Let's hit the 911 system
5 from a technology perspective first. I can say
6 categorically that there was absolutely no outage of
7 the 911 system during the Tropical Storm. The
8 technology performed as designed, with no bugs,
9 disruptions, or errors. However, persistent problems
10 with the carriers continue to undermine overall
11 service, and this is exacerbated during major weather
12 events. In particular, I expect that some New
13 Yorkers had difficulty connecting to 911 because the
14 storm knocked out power to telecom carrier
15 infrastructure, including cell phone towers, meaning
16 some mobile phones lost service or had degraded or
17 unstable service, depending on location and service
18 provider; and in the case of home phones or
19 landlines, we heard that certain carriers' trunks got
20 overwhelmed as a result of volume. To be clear:
21 these issues would have affected all of the
22 customer's calls, not just calls to 911. The telecom
23 carriers must harden their infrastructure. Sandy should
24 have taught them that. It's been 8 years. And I am not
25 telling you anything I haven't already told the leaders

1 of each of the major carriers themselves. Finally, as
2 Chief Napolitano will tell you in greater detail, at
3 the height of the storm, 911 call volume was
4 incredibly high. And in particular, for a sustained
5 period of time, there were more calls than there were
6 call-takers to answer them simultaneously. But the
7 911 system was built to handle exactly this type of
8 situation by queuing calls. When all the call takers
9 were busy, 911 callers got queued up, and connected
10 to the next available Police Communications
11 Technician in order. Now let me move on to 311. I
12 think the best way to understand the 311 response to
13 the storm is in the context of the changes we put in
14 place for COVID. During COVID, the role of 311
15 changed in an important way: much like 911, 311
16 became a lifeline of sorts for New Yorkers - the
17 number to call when you needed to be connected to a
18 physician, a meal, assistance with unemployment, help
19 applying for small business loans, the list goes on
20 and on; in essence, so much more than what you'd
21 traditionally think to call 311 for. So how did we
22 bring down wait times, which had spiked to almost an
23 hour at the end of March based on increased volumes,
24 to virtually zero by mid-April? Well, we did it by
25

1 adding hundreds of additional temporary call-takers,
2 including NYPD cadets; building out several new 311
3 call centers to accommodate the additional staff;
4 taking a data-driven approach to optimizing call
5 center operations; and creating "express lanes" for
6 certain types of calls. So when it became clear that
7 Tropical Storm Isaias might be making its way to New
8 York City, we turned to this very playbook: First,
9 we surged our staffing to 900 call takers on the day
10 of the storm. This was the largest number of call
11 takers 311 has ever had in a single day. Second,
12 during the height of the storm, we had 600 call
13 takers simultaneously taking calls, the largest
14 number of concurrent call takers ever answering the
15 phones at 311 by a factor of 5 pre-COVID. Third, we
16 ensured our telephone system had enough capacity to
17 accommodate the simultaneous call load and transfers.
18 Fourth, we created an express lane for callers
19 calling about Tropical Storm-related issues, so that
20 these callers wouldn't have to wait in queue behind
21 people calling, for example, about property tax
22 questions. And fifth, we added a voice recording up
23 front, with contact information for ConEd and PSE&G,
24 so that New Yorkers calling about power outages
25

1 wouldn't have to wait on the line to get connected to
2 the electric companies. In our planning, 311 pulled
3 out all of the stops and then some to make sure the
4 311 call center was as prepared as it could be to
5 meet New Yorkers needs. And to be clear, all of
6 these preparations were made 36 hours in advance. In
7 the end, the volume was enormous, driven by tree and
8 branch-related service requests, as well as calls
9 about power outages. For context, on the first
10 Tuesday in August last year, 311 received
11 approximately 38,000 calls. The full day total for
12 August 4, 2020 was a whopping 160,000 calls, and
13 120,000 of them had already come in by 3:30 in the
14 afternoon, when the worst of the storm began to pass.
15 To get even more granular, 311 received approximately
16 45,000 calls between noon and 3:30 p.m. That's a
17 rate of more than 12,000 calls per hour, or 200 calls
18 per minute for 3.5 hours. Using wait times as an
19 important metric, the results for August 4th were
20 quite good, and I'd venture to say, extraordinary,
21 given the volume. Callers who followed the prompts
22 to get to the express lane for storm-related calls
23 experienced wait times that were under five minutes
24 for the vast majority of the day, with max average
25

1 wait time of seven minutes during the one-hour period
2 between 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Importantly, storm-related
3 volume did not affect wait times for COVID-related
4 calls. New Yorkers using the standard express lane
5 for things like food deliveries or to get connected
6 to a primary care provider experienced de minimus
7 wait times all day. And Spanish-speaking callers who
8 followed the Spanish prompts saw no wait times at
9 all. Callers who did not follow any of the express
10 lane prompts saw an average 12-minute wait time at
11 2pm, which quickly dropped off to five minutes at 4
12 p.m., through the rest of the day. Now let's talk
13 about two things that didn't go according to plan on
14 the day of the storm: First, some callers who
15 submitted complaints about trees or branches did not
16 get an initial confirmation email that their service
17 request was made. However, these requests did make it
18 to the Parks Department, and the New Yorkers who
19 submitted them did receive email updates on the
20 status of their service requests. To be perfectly
21 clear, all that was missing was the initial
22 confirmation email. But I will be the first to say
23 that that is unacceptable. We have already put in a
24 fix to the 311 system to ensure that confirmation
25

1 emails for tree and branch-related service requests
2 are sent every time. Second, I understand the Parks
3 Department's site for reporting down trees or
4 branches was hit with a high volume in a short amount
5 of time. This meant that when 311 call takers used
6 the Parks website on the day of the storm to input
7 these service requests, intermittently they received
8 a notice that they should retry at a later time. In
9 certain cases, 311 asked callers to call back or
10 attempt the service request entry themselves through
11 the website. As I'll explain in a moment, these
12 instances did not ultimately prevent 311 and the
13 Parks Department from taking tree or branch service
14 requests related to the storm, either on the day of
15 the storm or thereafter. We made the Parks
16 Department aware that 311 call takers experienced
17 this issue, and the Parks Department notified us that
18 they had a fix in place by August 7th. Because I am
19 a proponent of belt and suspenders, we are also
20 building this form into the 311 portal itself. To
21 put the effects of this issue in perspective, I want
22 to make sure it's clear that 311 took the majority of
23 storm-related service requests about downed trees and
24 branches on the day of the storm, over 15,000 of
25

1 them. To put this volume in context, through August
2 9th, which represents a four-day post-storm grace
3 period, 311 received a total of 20,520 tree-related
4 service requests deduped to represent unique
5 locations. Now I'd like to take a moment to address
6 Intro 1775. It is very clear to me that the general
7 feedback I've received from the Council highlights
8 some of the most pressing issues associated with 311;
9 and geo-location services, which is the subject of
10 your legislation, is certainly chief among them. I
11 look forward to discussing this with you and
12 continuing to work to improve the 311 system. I hope
13 this presentation has given you a good sense of the
14 911 system's performance during Tropical Storm Isaias
15 and what I like to call 311 2.0, a service that
16 doesn't just respond to New Yorkers' needs, but
17 anticipates them; that is agile and proactive, and
18 striving to be more so every day. Thank you so much.

19
20 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Good morning
21 Chair Holden and Chair Borelli and members of the
22 Council. I'm Deputy Chief Richard Napolitano, the
23 Commanding Officer of the Communications Division for
24 the New York City Police Department. I'm joined
25 today by the Managing Attorney of the Legislative

1 Affairs Unit, Michael Clarke. On behalf of Police
2 Commissioner Dermot Shea, I wish to thank the Council
3 for the opportunity to comment on this important
4 manner. As Commanding Officer of the Communication
5 Division at the NYPD, I oversee all of the New York
6 City's 911 centers and dispatching operations. Our
7 dedicated police communications technicians commonly
8 known as PCTS, 911 operators, and police dispatchers
9 are thoroughly trained on how to handle each and
10 every one of the approximately nine million 911 calls
11 we receive each year with efficiency, precision, and
12 compassion. PCTs are often the unsung heroes of the
13 law enforcement community fielding thousands of calls
14 a day from individuals of all walks of life who are
15 often in the mix of the worst moments of their lives.
16 PCTs are given 13 weeks of initial training with
17 dispatchers given an additional seven weeks of
18 training. PCTs also routinely receive in-service
19 trainings. Training modules include use of the CAD
20 system, new code expansions, understanding routes,
21 and updates on revised directives system-wide. Upon
22 answering a call, the PCT determines the nature of
23 the emergency and routes it to the proper dispatcher
24 either NYPD, Fire Department or EMS who then
25

1 determines the appropriate responders for the
2 incident and dispatches them to the scene. As
3 Tropical Storm Isaias bore down on New York City, we
4 began to make plans to make sure that our call
5 centers were properly staffed. Our experience with
6 the worst storm since Hurricane Sandy indicated that
7 increasing our staffing by 33 percent over a typical
8 day tour would manage an expected potential increase
9 in call volume. On the day of the storm I was
10 monitoring the call volume as it progressed. At
11 around 11:30 a.m. we noticed the 911 calls were
12 spiking. In addition to the extra staff that we
13 already had in place, we began taking people off of
14 other assignments to staff the stations. Between
15 12:30 and 1:00 p.m. we received 3,247 calls. By
16 comparison on Tuesday, August 6th, 2019, we received
17 673 calls between 12:30 and 1:00. The call volume
18 continued to increase, peaking at 4,724 between 1:30
19 and 2:00. During this time we doubled our typical
20 staffing, connected training stations to the system
21 so that we had all available work stations staffed by
22 PCTs taking phone calls. This is significant because
23 no amount of additional staff could have reduced call
24 intake times since every possible call intake station
25

1 including our terminals used for training new PCTs
2 were activated and being used to assist New Yorkers
3 seeking emergency assistance. All told, we received
4 over 25,000 calls between noon and 4:00, which is
5 more than we received during an average 24-hour
6 period. We've received more than four times as many
7 calls than we did on average during the same time
8 period in August of 2019. This was by far the
9 highest call volume we have received since Hurricane
10 Sandy hit New York City in 2012. While the 911
11 system did not fail during the storm, the high call
12 volume did strain the system. Of the 25,000 calls we
13 received during this period, there was a delay in our
14 ability to answer the significantly elevated influx
15 of calls. Call volume slowly declined after the
16 peak, though remaining above normal through the early
17 evening. However, the increased staffing,
18 utilization of all available call stations and slowly
19 decreasing call volume prevented delays after 4:30
20 p.m. The NYPD takes the solemn duty seriously to
21 ensure prompt and professional response to anyone and
22 everyone contacting our emergency call center seeking
23 assistance. We understand that every second counts
24 in an emergency, and therefore we do everything in
25

1
2 our power to ensure that plans and protocols exist
3 and are timely executed to address elevated call
4 volume. This includes staying aware of potential
5 heightened volume due to approaching weather events
6 and staging our resources accordingly and quickly
7 activating those resources as was done during this
8 event. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to
9 these critical issues, and we look forward to
10 answering any questions you may have.

11 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Josh, is that all
12 who is testifying? Okay. I have a question just on
13 the outset because I thought I heard two different
14 things. Inspect [sic] Napolitano, you had said that
15 there were some internal delays with the system when
16 the volume started to peak. If what I go-- by the
17 way, your backgrounds are great. You guys should win
18 awards for Zoom backgrounds today. You both look
19 fantastic. But Commissioner Tisch said that there
20 were some carrier problems that led to the volume.
21 Was the problems that we saw-- in other words, the
22 delays that the customers or complainants faced, was
23 that a result of a carrier problem, or was that a
24 result of a staffing or volume on our side, on the
25 City side of things? Maybe I heard wrong, but I just

1 want to-- that was the only thing that stood out to
2 me. Josh, if you could unmute them.

3
4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Sorry. I just got
5 unmuted. Let me clarify. Two separate issues.
6 First, what I was referring to about the carrier
7 problems, New Yorkers across the five boroughs
8 reported issues with their cell phones generally,
9 working and cell phone service. That's what I was
10 talking about when I referenced the carrier problem.
11 So if I was in an area where cell phone tower lost
12 power, my personal phone may have lost service, may
13 have had degraded service which would affect all of
14 my calls. Okay? Including if I was calling 911.
15 Separately, what Chief Napolitano was addressing
16 before regarding [inaudible] and wait times. That
17 is-- those are two things [inaudible]

18 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay. Can you just
19 go over again how many call takers might be working
20 from home, what equipment they have, who's providing
21 that, and the percentage of the total call center
22 workforce is on [sic] at any given time?

23 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Sure. Are you
24 referencing 311 or 911 or both?

25 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Both.

2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: okay, so why I don't
3 start with 311 and then I can turn it over to Chief
4 Napolitano who can address 911. So, for 311, the
5 main call takers that we have are our CCRs. I think
6 our allotted headcount is 205 of them. We are
7 actually over-staffed now. We are above allotted
8 headcount. We're at 271. All of those CCRs access
9 the 311 dynamic physically from within the 311 call
10 center. They don't work at home. When COVID
11 [inaudible] in March and really in April when I took
12 over, the volume was so high people were on hold with
13 311 for an acceptably [sic] long amounts of time
14 because volume, and so what we did was we brought in
15 surge staffing. Those surge staffers, some of them
16 worked from city facilities, but others were able to
17 work at home. Now, those I would say the break-out
18 would probably be somewhere like 600 working from
19 home and 300 let's say working from the 311 call
20 center or other call centers that we put up. To
21 clarify, the systems that the call takers, the surge
22 staffers working at home are able to access are
23 different than the system the CCRs can access in the
24 311 call center itself. So while the surge staffers
25 were enormously helpful in terms of off-loading some

1 of the volume on the CCRs. They don't have the tools
2 or the ability to take the full complement of 311
3 calls that the CCRs take from within the call center,
4 which is why we created those express lanes [sic].
5 So if you were calling about a COVID-related issue,
6 the surge staffer had access through their portal to
7 take those types of call. And we set up the same
8 type of thing in advance of the storm, the express
9 lane for downed trees and branches so that the surge
10 staffers working from home would be able to take
11 those. Now, I'll let Napolitano respond to the
12 question on 911.

14 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: We have
15 approximately 1,350 call takers and dispatchers
16 assigned to the Communications Division. On the day
17 of the storm and leading up to the storm we had
18 numerous meetings taking a look at staffing based on
19 past storms, and we added an additional 33 percent of
20 our call takers to the morning. That was with an
21 account that we had a huge back-up, a resource pool,
22 of administrative workers that are technically doing
23 training, roll call, payroll, tape and records, but
24 because it's a Tuesday, between Monday and Friday,
25 most of the administrative staff work, we knew we had

1 that pool. If this storm was occurring on a weekend
2 I would have had to double my staffing on the
3 weekend. So, leading up to it, we had that pool
4 ready. I came in and I spoke with all of the unit
5 heads and I had them on standby with their headsets
6 available. So when this storm started increasing
7 around 11:30, we had extra staffing added. Then when
8 it hit us even harder at approximately 12 and after
9 12, we had all available staffing. We had training
10 cancelled. We even had 24 additional people come
11 from home. What happened was we filled up all
12 available call-taking positions as I said in my
13 testimony, and we even added the straining classroom,
14 like I mentioned, and we staffed that as well.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you. So, on
17 August 4th, Bill Niehart [sp?], the Press Secretary
18 to the Mayor, he had tweeted out that 311, and I
19 quote, "had already received 110,000 calls as of 3:00
20 p.m." that day. The Open Data dataset for 311,
21 though, shows there are 22,724 service requests and
22 18,250 call inquiries from that day. Do either of
23 you-- I guess I direct this more towards Commissioner
24 Tisch. Do you know how this 110,000 call number was
25 obtained, and should that alarm us since there are

1 only 40,000 or so service requests or inquiries that
2 were made? In other words, were there 60,000 calls
3 to 311 that went unanswered?
4

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Thank you very much
6 for that question and the opportunity to clarify.
7 There were-- Bill's tweet was correct in the numbers
8 that I laid out in my testimony, 160,000 calls for
9 the day. Those are also correct. There is a
10 difference between the number of calls that we take
11 at 311 and the number of service request or
12 inquiries. So, to start, not every call results in a
13 service request or an inquiry. So, for example, I
14 said that some people called that at the beginning of
15 the 311 welcome message we put up the numbers for
16 ConEd and PSE&G. So people calling about power-
17 related issues might not-- probably didn't wait on
18 the call to speak to an agent. They got the number
19 for ConEd, PSE&G, and they would have gone and called
20 them, those companies. So that's the first thing.
21 Second thing is at the bottom of all the data we
22 tried our hardest to put in place a clear disclaimer
23 which said that the numbers reflected in Open Data
24 don't reflect the total counts for service requests
25 and [inaudible] on what we've had to do [inaudible]

1 staffing during COVID. So the numbers in Open Data
2 reflect the numbers of service requests [inaudible]
3 by the CCRs that work in the 311 call center. They
4 do not account for the service request or the
5 informationals [sic] handled by our surge staffers
6 who are working from home. This is because in order
7 to accommodate the surge staffers, have them using
8 what's called our portal which is basically the 311
9 website. So, if I call 311 and I choose and express
10 lane and I get a surge staffer working from home,
11 that surge staffer can handle [inaudible] tree or
12 branch related request and send it over to the Parks
13 Department just like the CCRs can, but the system
14 because it's done through the portal rather than the
15 dynamics website, the system doesn't record that that
16 is a service request or a knowledge article handled
17 by the 311 call center. It looks on Open Data like
18 it was done through the website.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you.

21 Alright, I just want to switch gears before I hand it
22 over to Council Member Holden. 911 system line, were
23 people texting the 911 system, and if so, how many
24 during the storm?

25

3 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Yes. Yes, they
4 did Council Member. The texting went up pretty
5 significantly during the height of the storm. So we
6 had 61 texts during the second platoon. Typically we
7 have about 10 to 15, and then on the third platoon
8 that starts at 3:00 p.m. to 11 we had 36. So, we had
9 approximately 100 texts during this day, which is
10 approximately double of our typical text average.

11 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And were there any
12 issues given the spike in volume? Sorry, were there
13 any issues with the text to 911 given the volume
14 increase?

15 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: There were
16 some. There were some delays at the height of the
17 storm from around one o'clock to three o'clock. We
18 did substain [sic] delays.

19 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And just--

20 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: [interposing]
21 We had 24-- 24 delays during that time. So people
22 that were texting were also waiting to get through.

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: What is the normal
24 response time for texting--

25 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: [interposing]
I'm sorry, go ahead.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: What is the normal
3 response time for texting to 911? Not response times
4 when, you know, a unit is on scene, but when someone
5 texts, you know, grandpa's having a heart attack,
6 what is the typical time for the person to receive a
7 text response?

8 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: The typical,
9 basically response time when we respond back to them
10 with some type of text is almost immediate, several
11 seconds. Usually text volume is very low, handling
12 only maybe two a half-hour. Like I said, at 1:30 to
13 2:00 we handled 17. That's approximately eight times
14 greater than average. So, usually it's immediate, as
15 soon as the txt comes in our text operators are
16 available. Just like I said, it's not being used
17 very frequently, so the text operators are just there
18 waiting for a call to drop in. at this time, we
19 staffed up for text as well where we went to average
20 agents for the half hour. We had 11. Usually we
21 have like three or four. However, the texts take
22 longer to handle, and it does tie up our operators,
23 so there was delays as well. Like I said, there was
24 actually 24 delays during that time.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, just to
3 clarify, there were 24 delays of text. Can you just
4 say for the record how many delays on calls there
5 were 911?

6 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Yes, during the
7 24-hour period, we had 7,177 delays, and a delay is--

8 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: [interposing]

9 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: any call that
10 takes over 30 seconds to have an operator answer that
11 call.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Do we know what the
13 average time of the delay was?

14 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: We don't have
15 an average because the system does not do the
16 average, but we have the longest held, and
17 unfortunately, the longest held call for voice was
18 slightly over three and a half minutes.

19 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay, and do you
20 know what kind of case that was for the three and a
21 half minutes?

22 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: No, the system
23 doesn't which call it was. It just gives a half-hour
24 breakdown.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay. In your
3 experience did any of the people of the 24 or so you
4 mentioned that were delayed from texting, did they
5 not get an immediate text and then call? Were people
6 doing that?

7 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Yeah, some of
8 the texts they did wait. They waited several minutes
9 for a response. Most of the texts that day were for
10 trees down, wires down. They did receive a response.
11 However, it was delayed very similar to the voice
12 calls.

13 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Yeah, so, just I
14 want to go back to that. We know the longest was
15 three and a half minutes. The shortest delayed was
16 30 seconds, because that's even where we start
17 counting delayed. So, I find it troubling that we
18 can't get an average, because I think there's a big
19 difference between 30 seconds and three and a half
20 minutes. I think that's-- that is life or-- that's
21 not 15, 20 seconds. That's life or death in a real-
22 life situation, especially when-- correct me if I'm
23 wrong-- this is even before a dispatcher identifies
24 the nature of the call. You know, if it's a 911 call
25 about a downed tree, yeah, three and a half minutes

1 might not be a problem. But if it's three and a half
2 minutes while grandpa's having a heart attack, that
3 would certainly have a problem. When we implement
4 Next Gen 911, do we anticipate the same type of
5 problems? In other words, are we going to build this
6 fancy system for Next Gen 911 and then still be
7 limited by the number of staff that could handle a
8 volume of calls at any given time?
9

10 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: We still would
11 have similar problems as we did on the day of storm
12 Isaias. The problem is the huge spike in call volume
13 makes it difficult to handle from a number of
14 positions available as well as our number of
15 operators available, and I'll just expand upon that.
16 This was the highest call volume-- I know I already
17 said this in my testimony-- since Hurricane Sandy.
18 On Hurricane Sandy we went over 10 times the average
19 call volume. We have two call centers that were
20 fully-staffed and manned. For Hurricane Sandy we
21 would have needed 10 call centers, and we would have
22 needed 10 times the amount of personnel. It's very
23 difficult to keep up with that. For Tropical Storm
24 Isaias we would have needed five call centers as well
25 as five times the amount of staffing. And what I

1
2 believe is needed, in my opinion what we need is-- we
3 need to educate the public to not dial 911 unless
4 it's a life-threatening emergency. Many of these
5 calls were trees down. Unfortunately, that does make
6 somebody's day-- that is an emergency to most people
7 when a tree falls on their car, clips their car or
8 lands on their fence. However, in a storm like this
9 when there's thousands and thousands of trees down,
10 they shouldn't be dialing 911. If we could teach the
11 public to dial 311, and 311 will route it to the
12 correct agency, and the correct agency will respond
13 and eventually take care of the trees. I believe
14 that's what's really needed because these types of
15 storms are so huge and [inaudible], we can't build
16 enough call centers to handle this type of volume.

17 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, I definitely
18 agree with you that we should be pressuring the
19 public about 311, but let's stay with that on the
20 City's end. How quick can a 911 dispatcher offload a
21 case of a downed tree to 311, be it an operator or a
22 [inaudible].

23 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: we did do that,
24 and there was a lot of coordination between myself
25 and Commissioner Tisch and DoITT and 311, and we did

1
2 do that as quickly as possible on the day of the
3 storm. It's a-- if I just had to-- maybe about 30,
4 35 seconds. We have to obtain the information, know
5 that the emergency is strictly just a downed tree and
6 nobody's in danger. Once we obtain those facts such
7 as asking, you know, is anybody trapped in the car if
8 it landed in a car. Is anybody in danger, if it fell
9 on wires? Are the wires sparking? Are they live
10 wires. As soon as we're able to obtain that
11 information we transfer to 311.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And my final
13 question--

14 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: [interposing]
15 Sorry, Council Member.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Has there ever been
17 any thought or maybe OEM-- I regret they're not here
18 to answer this. But has there ever been any thought
19 similar to the way during storms we empower agency
20 managers, you know, perhaps from DOT or DEP or
21 something to manage some of the shelters? Has there
22 ever been thought to train some city workers in some
23 sort of a reserve core of 911 or 311 dispatchers that
24 could be deployed just in short bursts in another
25 storm?

1
2 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: That would be
3 very difficult. I'll just do my best to explain why.
4 The system is-- requires 13 weeks of training. They
5 learn codes. We make changes quite often to the
6 system which requires updates and additional training
7 every time we make some type of whether it's code
8 change or system change. So, unless they're handling
9 calls on a regular basis, their training-- just say
10 we trained them six months ago. If they don't use
11 that skill, they're going to get rusty. They're not
12 going to be efficient, and also the changes would
13 make their response, their handling calls probably to
14 sufficient just to handle in emergencies.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Would there be a
16 value in retaining some retirees that could perhaps
17 more easily adapt to whatever changes have come
18 across? Again, you're talking about--

19 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: [interposing]
20 Retirees, we have considered that. It gets
21 complicated, though, with the pay, and-- let me
22 explain what we have done that I believe is helpful.
23 For COVID, due to the large number of our operators
24 that contracted it, we trained over 60 of our police
25 officers that were prior police communications

1 technicians and have since moved onto the Police
2 Department and become sworn police officers. So, we
3 have those police officers as a back-up pool. We
4 have them reporting to our call center every month
5 though to continue handling calls. So that's the
6 complication where they have to keep that skill
7 sharp, and they have to repeatedly. So with members
8 of the NYPD we're able to have them come and report
9 to the call center, and we schedule that every month.
10 So with other agencies it would be very difficult.
11 It's not impractical.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay. I will turn
14 it over Chair Holden, and I'm glad there was a -- I'm
15 glad there was a good reason why we couldn't do that,
16 because it seems like such an obvious, you know,
17 solution, but as you pointed out there certainly
18 seemed to be a real reason. Chair Holden?

19 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you, Chair
20 Borelli. I have a few questions. And by the way,
21 thank you Commissioner and Chief for your testimony
22 and valuable information that we've heard this
23 morning. I just want to talk about storm prep for a
24 few minutes. Now, you mention-- of course we were
25 overloaded. You know, in preparation from the storm,

1 did you have the call takers come to some kind of
2 meeting, whether it's virtual or otherwise, to talk
3 about how we handle the volume, how do we shift
4 during the storm some of the calls, how to handle
5 some of the calls in a quick manner? Was that meeting
6 of all the call takers, did that occur prior to the
7 storm?
8

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So, I'll start
10 [inaudible]. I'll start by answering for 311. So,
11 yes, there was a lot of pre-storm preparation. It
12 really started 36 hours ahead of when the storm hit
13 when it became very clear that it was heading
14 directly for us. In terms of the training of the
15 call takers, what we do is we put out job aides which
16 is something that they're used to. So, anytime
17 there's a content change, it happens fairly
18 frequently at 311. We update our content all the
19 time, but whenever there's an important change to
20 processing or content we put out job aides that all
21 of the call takers review prior to coming on shift.
22 So, I believe the day of the storm there was a job
23 aide about how we were going to be handling the 311
24 calls about downed trees and branches. There was
25 also additional communication on the call takers

1 throughout the day. For example, when we were
2 preparing to handle more volume being transferred to
3 us from 911 after I spoke with Chief Napolitano.
4 That communication, that's an example of a real-time
5 communication that would go out to all of the call
6 takers.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay. Now did you,
9 in preparation for the storm, did you increase
10 utilization of automated telephone messages,
11 possibly, sort of robo calls or short message
12 services or social media, email alerts, and the
13 City's website disseminate information and to reduce
14 non-critical information requests. Because we got a
15 lot of that during, obviously, during the storm to
16 get everything, and some of the calls shouldn't have
17 been placed to 911 and so forth or 311. But doing
18 forward, could we utilize more of that in the system,
19 like preparation for the storm? Did we do that this
20 time, by the way?

21 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So, yes. I saw a
22 number of tweets from various administration accounts
23 and social media postings to try to get volume off of
24 911 and send it over to 311. There was a lot
25 messaging around that. Certainly, once the Chief and

1 I spoke at around 11:30 that day and it became clear
2 that the volume on 911 was building to the point of
3 like developing a que. And as the Chief said before,
4 I believe public messaging about when to call 911 is
5 probably the most important thing we can do going
6 forward to take some of the strain off of 911 in
7 these major weather events.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Yeah, because I
10 think educating the public-- for instance, if a tree
11 falls in front of my house and it's blocking the
12 street, people have to know, is that a 911 or is that
13 311? If it hits the hires, obviously it's more
14 dangerous. Electrical wires, that sounds like a 911.
15 But we need to break it down. We need to-- and it
16 can go through the Council offices also that we could
17 educate our constituents, because there is that gray
18 area, and if we could sort of cut down on the number
19 of calls, educate people. And the robo calls, so you
20 get a call and you say-- it tells people what to do
21 in the event that this happens. Obviously, most of
22 the complaints are downed trees, especially in my
23 district or in Queens County. So we need-- and what
24 I-- you know, I got some complaints that the 311
25 operator or the 911 operator didn't know what to do

1
2 in that case. We even had one, a few callers, saying
3 that they stopped taking those downed tree calls on
4 911. So, educating the public, putting-- using
5 social media, for instance, using anything we can to
6 get the word out prior and how to prep-- and I know a
7 lot of people don't listen to it, but I think we
8 learn lessons from these storms over and over again.
9 This-- we learned that a tropical storm can knock us
10 out a lot more sometimes than a hurricane, depending
11 on how it hits. We learned the number of calls that
12 couldn't be placed or people got recordings, and I
13 just want to get to that in a second. But,
14 preparation, if we could all be included in storm
15 preparation so we can help with your, obviously your--
16 - the plight of 311 and 911 during this time. I
17 think reaching out to us might be the best way to go
18 here.

19 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Just to-- so maybe
21 can have a taskforce set up next time with the
22 Council involved, and going forward to handle some of
23 these calls, Commissioner. You might-- you know, we
24 might be able to educate everybody together. Now,
25 let me just talk about the recordings that you

1 mentioned, Commissioner, that people got in some
2 cases, was that on the 911 system that somebody got a
3 recording? Was that the-- you called it express
4 lane. Was that where the recordings came in?
5

6 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So, two different
7 types of recordings. For 311, when you call 311 you
8 reach our IVR. It's our-- it's the way we direct
9 calls to the appropriate call-taker. So, press one
10 if you're calling about Coronavirus; press two if
11 you're calling about downed trees and branches. When
12 I talk about express lane, it's in the context of 311
13 and it's those. Press one for COVID-related calls.
14 Press two for downed trees and branches. And what we
15 do is we have-- we staff those express routes with
16 hundreds of call-takers depending on the volume that
17 we're anticipating. So on the day of the storm, if
18 you pressed-- I think it was actually press three.
19 You press three for downed tree or branch related to
20 the storm, there were 600 call-takers waiting to take
21 those types of calls. For 911, the recording that
22 your constituent is recording, I believe is
23 different. It's not express lane. So, when you call
24 911, when they're taking delays, so when the calls
25 are beginning to que, there's not a call-taker

1 available to take the call immediately. The caller
2 hears a recording which expresses to the caller that
3 they're waiting for-- they've reached 911 and they're
4 waiting for the next available agent or police
5 communications technician to handle the call.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Alright. Let's go--
8 - let me go back to the tree complaints that you
9 mentioned earlier with the Parks Department. You
10 mentioned that the problem that you had is people
11 didn't get a confirmation in making that complaint.
12 What was the problem with that and what caused that,
13 and how are you going to change that going-- moving
14 forward?

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Sure. There were
16 two types of problems that I referenced in my
17 testimony. The first was that when callers called
18 311 and reached a surge staffer, that surge staffer
19 entered the service request through the portal, and
20 the person making the call or making the complaint
21 didn't receive an initial email confirmation that
22 their service request was accepted or taken by the
23 311 system. To be clear, 100 percent of those
24 service requests were taken and accepted. It's just
25 that the member didn't get the confirmation email. I

1 said in my testimony, and I'll reiterate, it's
2 unacceptable. We found the part of the code in the
3 311 system where that error occurred, and that has
4 been fully addressed. The second issue that we face
5 with 311 related to the downed trees and branches
6 that day was the Parks Department site that accepts
7 service requests from either the public or surge 311
8 call-takers became intermittently unavailable based
9 on the very high volume in a very short amount of
10 time. The Parks Department, we notified the Parks
11 Department and they have already addressed that issue
12 as well so that their site is going to respond better
13 under the unanticipated volume that we had that day.
14 What I said in my testimony is because I believe in
15 belts and suspenders, I'm also building that downed
16 tree branches form into the portal itself so that
17 when that's done, 311 surge call-takers won't have to
18 go and put extra volume on the parks website. They
19 will be able to do it through the 311 portal itself.
20

21 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay, I just want--
22 my final-- I have some more questions, but I'll turn
23 it back to Chair Borelli after this. There's still
24 problems associated with the location of the service
25 request on the mobile app. The interface is not

1 user-friendly and makes it difficult to enter the
2 location, unless the user knows the exact address.
3 That's a problem we faced for a while. We live in an
4 era where technology is advancing at, you know, at a
5 great rate obviously. So what makes it so
6 challenging to improve the location services on the
7 app?
8

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: It is challenging,
10 and I'll go through the reasons why it's so
11 challenging, but it is definitely something I am
12 looking forward to rolling up my sleeves and working
13 on with you. Frankly, when we spoke, you know, seven
14 months ago about this, this is something I would have
15 hoped we would have addressed already. With COVID,
16 the work that we've done on the 311 system over the
17 past five months has been largely keeping up with
18 different service offerings that all of the agencies
19 are putting out there. 311 is the place to call for
20 every city service. So for the past five months
21 we've just been working really hard to keep up with
22 all of those-- all of those new offerings, but now
23 that that is hopefully [knocks on desk] quieting
24 down, we look forward to working with you on
25 improving location services on the app and on the

1 website. I don't want to bore you too much with the
2 technical detail, but I'll just explain 311
3 integrates with a number of agency systems. 311
4 takes the request and sends it to whatever agency
5 needs to respond. Each of those systems has their
6 own geolocation service. So what we really need to
7 do, which is broader than 311, it's fixing it for 311
8 but then also at the same time upgrading all of those
9 systems that 311 touches at all the agencies to have
10 the same geolocation service, because when I take a
11 request through the app, that address needs to go
12 into another system. So, if it's Parks, for example,
13 downed trees or branches, it's got to go into the
14 Park system and they need to be able to accept that
15 address. We can talk at length about this. I'd love
16 to give you a comprehensive briefing on it, because
17 it's definitely something I agree needs to be
18 improved. It will make a dent in terms of enhancing
19 the customer experience of 311 which is exactly what
20 we're looking to do.

22 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Okay. Thank you,
23 Commissioner. Back to you Chair Borelli.

24 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you, and
25 before I turn it over to Council Member Brannan, I'd

1 like to acknowledge the presence of Council Members
2 Koo, Ulrich, and I saw Council Member Lander who
3 appeared to be outdoors. Council Member Brannan for
4 questions?
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you,
7 Chairs. I wanted to ask a couple of questions about
8 the staffing levels for 911 and 311. What are the
9 total numbers there for staffing?

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I'll start with 311
11 and then Chief Napolitano will take the question on
12 911. For 311, I believe we have an authorized
13 [inaudible] headcount of 265 CCRs. We're [inaudible]
14 staffed, so we're above our allocated staffing at
15 this very moment. We're at 271. And Chief, on 911?

16 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Our headcount,
17 we have approximately 1,350 911 operators.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay. And how
19 many calls-- what's the average call per day, the
20 311-- if I'm an operator at 311 or an operator at
21 911, how many calls a day am I taking?

22 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Okay, the
23 average operator can handle 10 calls a half hour, so
24 approximately 20. So, if you multiply that by six
25 for the hours that they're actually working,

1 approximately 120 calls during an eight-hour period,
2 an eight-hour work period.
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: But most of
5 these folks are working longer than eight hours,
6 right?

7 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: During an
8 emergency such as this, yes, there would be a
9 significant amount of overtime. For example, on the
10 day of the storm we held all of the operators from
11 the day tour on to the four to 12 and to the
12 afternoon shift.

13 COMMISSIONER TISCH: And for 311,-- okay
14 thank you, Chief. For 311 our call-takers are
15 handling, on a normal day now, between 50 and 70,000
16 calls per day. That's different than the number of
17 calls we take to 311, because many of the calls that
18 we take can be handled by our voice recording
19 service.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: And is there--
21 what is the-- especially for 911 operators, is there
22 any support or consideration given for, you know,
23 mental health and breaks and that kind of stuff with
24 the stress that they're under?
25

DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Absolutely.

The breaks, they get breaks every two hours at the minimum. They get several breaks throughout the day.

They have a lunch break. They have breaks split up between the lunchtime as well, at the minimum two.

So, just on a typical day tour they would get a

break-- you could say, 40 minute break before lunch,

and then they would get an hour for lunch, as well as

a 20 minute break after lunch, and they would also

have personals where if they needed a bathroom break

or if they had any issues. If they've handled a very

difficult call, we encourage them to actually step

away and get some time to themselves. We have a

quiet room in the Bronx. We also have a unit that's

sole purpose is to just help them get through

difficult calls and difficult days, Employee

Assistance Unit.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Do you think-- I

mean, if money was not a consideration, are you

comfortable with these staffing levels?

DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Yes, I am.

COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: So you don't

think we need-- we don't need more?

DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: No.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: What about for
3 311?

4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I took over 311 in
5 the middle of April when volume was, you know,
6 through the roof. So we really had to rely a lot on
7 the surge staffing that we had, both in terms of the
8 NYPD cadets who stepped in big for us, taking 311
9 calls, and some outside vendors that we hired to take
10 the calls, but the volume that we have been receiving
11 for the past six months has not been normal at all.
12 It's been much greater than, you know, the volume we
13 took, for example, a year ago.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: So, just to
15 reiterate we-- what Chair Holden brought up about how
16 some of the calls to 911 went to-- were going to
17 voicemail during the storm. Was that just, you know,
18 I guess-- pardon the pun. Was that just a perfect
19 storm? I mean, what made-- what exactly made that
20 happen?

21 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Can I-- I want to
22 just clarify. No calls went to voicemail. What
23 happened is--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: [interposing] It
25 didn't go to voicemail; no one answered.

1
2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: well, when there are
3 more calls coming into the 911 system then there are
4 call-takers to take them. The calls get cued up.
5 And so that's what happens at 911 starting around
6 11:30 in the morning. There were more callers than
7 there were call-takers to handle those calls. So
8 those calls get handled by an agent in the order that
9 they come in.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: And that was the
11 first time that's ever happened?

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: No, certainly not.
13 The Chief explained that we consider delays at 911 to
14 be anything over-- any wait over 30 seconds, and so
15 that's definitely not the first time that 911 has
16 taken delays. Chief, would you like to expand on
17 that?

18 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Sure. Any
19 time, as Commissioner Tisch explained, it takes over
20 30 seconds, it's a delay. It's something we do our
21 best to avoid. However, major events, not just major
22 storms, but major explosion, a very noticeable fire,
23 these type of events cause an influx of 911 calls
24 that we do not have enough operators. When something
25 like that does occur, we did what we did with

1 Tropical Storm Isaias, as far as pulling any
2 administrative people off of their administrative
3 duties and have them report to the call-taking spot.
4 However, this event was just, you know, a very-- like
5 I've said before, it was the biggest even since
6 Hurricane Sandy. Something like this is very
7 difficult to have enough operators available.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: And but when we
10 see delays like this, and we saw delays like this
11 during Hurricane Sandy as well? I don't remember.

12 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Of course [sic].

13 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Yeah.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: We can hear you.

16 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Okay.

17 Hurricane Sandy, the delays were substantially worse.
18 We didn't actually have as many operators logged in
19 as we did during Tropical Storm Isaias. Like I said,
20 we were able to prepare, and individuals were also
21 able to report to work. In Hurricane Sandy, a large
22 percentage of our operators weren't able to report to
23 work

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Something you
25 said earlier as far as folks calling 911, I mean, I

1 certainly was raised thinking that you only call 911
2 in a serious, serious emergency. But over the past
3 few years, certainly you've heard from other folks
4 that say you should call 911 because that's why the
5 operators are there. You're not wasting their time.
6 If it's not an emergency they'll transfer you. Are
7 we at a situation where we're sort of changing that
8 messaging? Or I mean, because I was certainly raised
9 like you don't call 911 unless, you know, your life
10 is in immediate danger. But then, you know, and it
11 was like, you know, you don't want to make a false
12 call because you'd get in trouble if you made a false
13 call [inaudible] when we were kids, right? But
14 definitely over the past 20 years or so there's been
15 messaging that, well, you should call 911, you know,
16 if you're in danger or if you're concerned about
17 something, and then the operator can then decide or
18 determine or triage if that's worthy of a 911 call.
19 I don't think that there's people who-- I mean, this
20 is something that we would have to work on. I don't
21 think that there's anyone who calls 311 or thinks
22 about calling 311 if there's an emergency of any
23 kind, and unfortunately, I don't think there's many
24 people that-- I don't think there's many people that
25

1
2 equate 311 with any urgency of any kind, and that's
3 part of the problem. I understand we don't want
4 people calling 911 just because a large branch fell
5 down, but they know that when they call 311,
6 basically the canned response is we'll check it out
7 within 14 days, and you know, it's basically nothing
8 ever happened. So, I think there's a perception issue
9 there as far as the two services.

10 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: It's possible
11 that individuals believe that by calling 911
12 improperly that they're situation would be reacted
13 [sic] quicker. That's not the case, and as you were
14 raised, I would hope to educate the public to not
15 call 911 in times like this. A tree falling down in
16 front of your house, even if it fell on your car,
17 it's very unfortunate; however, it's not a 911
18 emergency. If the tree falls down and a one-way
19 smaller street that's not an emergency either. If a
20 tree falls down on the Long Island Expressway, due to
21 the need for that highway to be open, that would be a
22 911 call. So this does need some education for the
23 community and if more people thought of 911 as you
24 do, Council Member, we probably would have less
25 problems with a major storm.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: But I mean,
3 there's also-- correct me if I'm wrong. I mean, I
4 know PD also is very focused on data, and a lot of
5 times they want, you know, calling 911 in order to
6 make a case where the first thing they'll thing of-
7 like I now with some of my local precincts, if I get
8 complaints about issues or concerns about issues, the
9 first thing they'll do is to take a look to see if
10 there were any 911 calls made. And some-- a lot of
11 times there aren't. Like, it could be an issue that
12 everyone on the block is aware of, but for whatever
13 reason they haven't been calling 911. And if there
14 are no calls logged in for that location, it's harder
15 to get them to believe that there's an issue here
16 because they're so focused on that data. So, I think
17 that's sort of-- that's sort of the problem because
18 you don't people just calling 911 for anything. But
19 they don't feel any urgency of calling 311, so
20 there's sort of a grey area there, and because NYPD
21 puts such a focus on that, there's-- it's a problem
22 because you want people to call to make those
23 complaints, but you also don't want them calling if
24 it's not an emergency. So, and calling the old
25

1 rotary phone at the police precinct is, you know,
2 something from the 1950's, you know?

3
4 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: I understand
5 their concern, and it makes perfect sense for
6 criminal matters for [inaudible] progress or for just
7 to say a drug condition, a drug deal [inaudible] It
8 would make sense to call 911 to document this and it
9 would strengthen their case that they've tried
10 numerous times to address this. However, for non-
11 emergencies such as trees down or a blocked driveway,
12 you know, just to cover some of the 311. They should
13 call 311 and that would be documented, and they would
14 also, if they had to go to court or they had a
15 problem with their neighbor, from what I understand,
16 yes, they do keep track of that, and it would show
17 that they're trying to address the conditions. So,
18 in some cases it makes sense: crime, and emergency,
19 911, will be documented for [inaudible] non-life-
20 threatening emergencies, non-emergencies 311 would be
21 better.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay, and--
23 okay. Yeah, and I think-- yeah, I mean, I think
24 this-- that's part of the concern, I guess. Because
25 then, you know, we need to the information to sort of

1 back up what the neighbors are saying. They have to
2 have a way that they can actually log this stuff, and
3 you know, make it-- I guess build a cast around it,
4 and that's certainly part of the thinking there. My
5 last question, I guess. As far as social media and
6 twitter and stuff is concerned with 311, I see
7 sometimes-- sometimes it's constituents of mine who
8 might tweet at me and at 311 or at any agency and the
9 311 will pick it up, but there's always an extra
10 step. Is there a way that-- it's always basically
11 okay, I see the photo of the issue that needs to be
12 addressed by 311. It's staring right at me and
13 here's the address, but now, sort of, the 311 bot or
14 whoever's managing the social media then says, okay,
15 but now can you call or click on this link to fill
16 this thing out, and it's just an extra step. Like,
17 why can't it just be if someone is raising an issue
18 to 311 on social media that it's picked up and
19 someone's there to enter it in, instead of actually
20 asking the resident to actually then do that work?
21 It just seems like a needless extra step?

22
23 DIRECTOR MORRISROE: Hi, Council Member,
24 Joe Morrisroe from 311. I'm going to field this
25 question on behalf of Commissioner Tisch. Thank you

1 for the feedback, and first off, there are 311
2 employees who actually do field that, those questions
3 through twitter, and they actually offer a couple of
4 options. Sometimes, information is needed. A
5 picture is great, but there are some coordinates that
6 may be needed such as an address or an intersection.
7 And the way the model is we can offer the-- give the
8 customer the link so they can then submit it directly
9 or we offer to DM the customer, direct message the
10 customer to be able to obtain that additional
11 information, be it an address or maybe just another
12 step in the description process, but the goal is to
13 try to make it as simple as possible for the
14 customer. And as you noted, other agencies will
15 "loop" 311 in so we can go through that mechanism to
16 produce the end result which is a service request to
17 the agency and a document [inaudible] the customer.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay. Yeah, I
20 just want to make it as easy as possible. I mean,
21 it's-- you know, most people don't even take the
22 time. You know, they just see an issue and they go,
23 eh whatever, right? But the fact that someone's
24 willing to actually take the time to bring it to our
25 attention, you know, I want to make it as easy as

1 possible for them to actually have it addressed, and
2 having an extra step is just another sort of obstacle
3 for a resident, you know. Yeah, I appreciate it.
4 Look, most importantly, I mean I think that we don't
5 think about the 911 operators who are really our
6 first, first responders. They're the first in line.
7 You know, hearing that you certainly take into
8 account their mental health is very, very important,
9 because I don't think enough of us think about what
10 these folks go through and what they have to take
11 home to their families every day, every night, and
12 some of the calls that they take, the stress level
13 must be just unimaginable. So, I appreciate that you
14 guys are sensitive to that, and thank you.

16 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Thank you, sir.

17 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you. I'd
18 like to recognize Council Member Deutsch for
19 questions.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yeah, thank you
21 very much. Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you,
22 Chief for all the great work and hard work you're
23 both doing to rectify the issue with 311 and 911. My
24 question is actually when someone calls 311 about a
25

1 tree down, who determines the time that the agency,
2 the time frame that the agency must respond by?

3
4 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I believe you're
5 referring to our SLA.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yeah.

7 COMMISSIONER TISCH: The SLA's are set by
8 the responding agencies.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, if, you
10 know, we all know that the NYPD was defunded. Parks
11 Department was defunded by more than 85 million
12 dollars, DSS was defunded by like 1.1 billion, and
13 sanitation was defunded by more than 100 million
14 dollars. So, how does the back log effect the system
15 and user activity where one may continuously check
16 the status on their complaint online, or they would
17 make repeated calls on the same issue by calling 311.
18 Because I have a constituent that called multiple
19 times for like a tree-- tree branches that were
20 laying in the street after the storm, and he
21 continuously calls 311 because on the 311 system it
22 keeps on checking that the case was closed. And
23 also, my second question is, do you have any stats of
24 how many repeated calls there are to 311 on this same
25 specific issue?

1
2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: So, I'll take the
3 first question now, and I'm going to use it as an
4 opportunity to plug a new feature that we actually
5 recently put into the 311 system which is an idea
6 raised to me by Chair Holden. Several months ago he
7 told me that his constituents didn't get conformation
8 emails or updates about their 311 service requests
9 through email, that they only got those confirmations
10 and updates if they had an account with 311. So
11 about two months ago we implemented a change to the
12 311 system whereby anyone who puts a service request
13 in through 311 whether by phone, website, or the app.
14 If they give us an email address, they receive both
15 confirmation emails as well as updates on the status
16 of their service request. Now, obviously, those
17 updates are generated by the responding agency going
18 into the system and updating the ticket, but those
19 now are available to 100 percent 311 customers who
20 give us an email address. And on your second
21 question about repeat callers, I'm going to have to
22 try to pull that data for you and follow up with you
23 on it. What I can say is in terms of general call
24 volume or general wait times at 311, they're really
25 de minimis. I mean, with added so much surge

1 staffing, the idea being make 311 really responsive,
2 the 311 call center really responsive to New Yorkers'
3 needs. So, in a normal day now, if you call 311 you
4 most likely won't wait on hold at all, which is
5 something that we're really proud of and we've worked
6 really hard to make the 311 service more customer
7 friendly.

9 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you. I don't
10 see any other hands, so I will turn it back to
11 Council Member Holden for additional questions.

12 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you, Chair
13 Borelli. Commissioner Tisch, we had the opportunity
14 to review the New York City 311 Task Order provided
15 by DoITT last year. According to the Task Order
16 there were no provisions for patches or updates to
17 the NYC 311 app in the contract. At our last
18 hearing, or at a hearing on January 21st, 2020 you
19 responded that you will let us know about patching
20 provisions. However, as of this date, we have yet to
21 receive an answer to the following questions: Are
22 patching mechanisms addressed in the current IBM
23 contract with New York City 311?

1
2 COMMISSIONER TISCH: I apologize for not
3 following up with you on that issue, but I can say
4 yes, that has been corrected.

5 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: I know you were
6 busy, so I'm not-- you were busy with a pandemic, so
7 I understand.

8 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Yes, we have
9 corrected all of the issues that we identified and
10 many of which you pointed out, and of course patching
11 and security of the 311 system are our highest
12 priority.

13 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Great, okay. I'll
14 just give this to Chief Napolitano. Chief, I
15 understand that in the text to 911 there were--
16 operators, call-takers handle both, is that true that
17 they hand text and regular calls?

18 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Yeah, so our
19 operators are trained to handle both; however, we
20 have it split where voice operators for the day, they
21 just handle voice calls. We have them actually
22 logged in to handle solely voice calls. The same is
23 text operators. Once they log in, they're logged in
24 as text operators. However, they're trained
25 obviously to handle both.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: But obviously,
3 certain people are faster at texting, right? I mean,
4 they would prob-- you know, they would most likely be
5 better if they were just doing that. If they're
6 really fast in texting, that they be just doing that,
7 and I think especially during an emergency that
8 probably should be implemented. Do you do that?

9 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Chair Holden, I-- as
10 you know, I used to oversee 911 call-taking
11 operations at the NYPD. I worked very closely with
12 Chief Napolitano, and I welcome and encourage you to
13 take a trip over to the 911 call center. You have
14 never seen faster typing in your life. That's what
15 these agents [sic] do, all day, every day. Whether
16 it's taking calls or texts, they're constantly
17 inputting information into the 911 system, and
18 they're amazing at it. So, I think everyone there is
19 much faster texter/typer than most.

20 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Right, but that's a
21 talent, and I think it should-- we should exploit
22 that, especially not put them on calls because their
23 expertise is obviously texting much faster than the
24 average person. But let me--
25

1
2 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: [interposing]
3 Council Member?

4 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Yeah?

5 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Just to expand
6 on that, we do have individuals that are very
7 talented that work more often in that text aisle.
8 So, the individuals that are very talented at that
9 skill and appreciate it and enjoy it I should say we
10 assign more often.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Right, okay. So, it
12 makes sense. Let me just ask you another question
13 and then I'll turn it back to Chair Borelli. We
14 understand Next Generation 911 is set to be rolled
15 out in the next few years. Do any of you foresee
16 Next Generation 911 running into a similar capacity
17 issues that we faced recently?

18 COMMISSIONER TISCH: You want to take it?

19 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: Okay, I'm back.
20 I can see-- I can see a similar situation happening,
21 that's why I know I'm repeating myself, but we really
22 need the public to understand that these type of
23 natural disasters, that 911 should not be used for
24 trees down, wires down, and again, you'd have to go
25 back to Sandy eight years ago, but it was similar

1 where hopefully we're able to, you know, learn a lot
2 from this and also teach to the community not to dial
3 911. Otherwise, it could happen.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: And just one more
6 little question about the upload of 311 pictures,
7 application photos and video, do we have an update on
8 that commissioner when we might see an expansion of
9 that?

10 COMMISSIONER TISCH: We-- based on your
11 feedback, we have added that feature for the vast
12 majority of the new service request types that we've
13 put in place, and based on the list that you gave us
14 of the service request that you think you would be
15 most relevant for, the legacy service request you
16 think would be more relevant for. We're planning a
17 major 311 release that's going to include that.
18 Don't want to bore you, but just want to mention on
19 complexity, which is my problem to solve, but just so
20 you understand. Adding it to the 311 system is easy,
21 right? I could basically flip a button and add
22 pictures to every service request type. The issue
23 falls in terms of getting it to the agencies
24 themselves. Not all agencies use the 311 system.
25 The NYPD does, for example, so it's really easy to

1
2 get them pictures. But other agencies that don't use
3 the 311 dynamic system, but that take the data from
4 the 311 dynamic system and bring it into an in-house
5 system. Those systems need to be able to accept
6 pictures as well. It's not useful to the member of
7 the public if 311 can get the picture. They really
8 need the agency that's auctioning the service request
9 to get the picture, too. So that's what we're
10 rolling up our sleeves and working on right now.

11 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: So we still have the
12 problem of the agency cooperating and actually
13 looking at the photos because we've had that in the
14 past, so.

15 COMMISSIONER TISCH: [inaudible] it is a
16 problem of them cooperating. It's something that we
17 are working with them on, and I think, you know, in
18 this day and age that everyone understands the
19 importance and [inaudible] of pictures. So it's
20 something that is the person who's overseeing 311
21 now, then I am eager to work with other city agencies
22 to roll out at your suggestion.

23 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: Thank you. Thank
24 you, Commissioner. Thanks, Chair Borelli.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you, and I'd
3 like to recognize Council Member Lander for
4 questions.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thanks very much,
6 Chair. Thank you, Commissioner and Chief, for all
7 your time with us today and all these good answers.
8 Having-- and I apologize, I missed a chunk earlier,
9 but I just want to follow up on a question that Chair
10 Holden started to ask about moving forward to Next
11 Gen 911. I know in the big hearing that we had on
12 sort of, you know, priorities, there are a lot of
13 them, and I understand COVID has obviously
14 interrupted a lot of them. I think it's great that
15 the text-to-911 came online, even amidst COVID. So,
16 props to you for getting that done. It would have
17 been easy to miss that. You testified in that last
18 hearing about some of the both benefits and then, you
19 know, the long-term nature of moving beyond that to
20 Next Gen 911, and I'd just love a little status
21 update. I could see being a thing of like there is so
22 much work to do given all of the others things you've
23 outlined in this hearing, that honestly that is just
24 going to way until the next mayoral administration or
25 no, that's really underway in the backrooms and

1 there's a lot going on to get there. I just wonder
2 if you could give us an update of where those things
3 are?
4

5 COMMISSIONER TISCH: Thank you for that
6 question. You know, during March, April, May, June,
7 and July as the IT agency. It seems like every
8 agency in the City wanted to bring on a new service
9 online, and we had really important work to help
10 agencies do that, and we were very busy as you can
11 imagine, but it was really important to me not to let
12 the general work of the agency slip too much or
13 frankly slip at all on the really important programs.
14 So, as you mentioned, we continued forward with our
15 plan to release text-to-911 on time in June. Same
16 thing went for Next Gen. I had committed to the
17 Council on my last Next Gen update that we would be
18 registering all of the Next Gen contracts by June
19 this year, and that was done. We decommissioned
20 Nyslen [sp?]. So, again, despite the huge influx of
21 work we didn't stop plowing forward on the major
22 programs that DoITT has been working on and the
23 commitments that we've made. Certain things have
24 slipped, and that has to happen, but the big ones are
25 plowing forward.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Sorry, there was
3 some construction, city sponsored construction work
4 downstairs, so I tried to mute so you wouldn't hear
5 that background noise, but then I didn't have the
6 power to unmute myself. I guess I heard the Chief
7 talk about the ways in which even the Next Gen 911
8 system obviously will, you know, be staffed by
9 people, and so it could have some of the same
10 challenges of staffing that we saw during the storm.
11 I guess I wonder whether it will have benefits as
12 well. You know, hopefully part of the idea of, you
13 know, moving to an all-digital system is-- I don't
14 know whether it means that more things can be more
15 quickly moved and transferred. Will there be some
16 benefits to having Next Gen 911 in terms of search
17 capacity, you know, or response times, or some of the
18 kinds of things that people would be, you know,
19 ordinarily associated with a big upgrade, or is this
20 really just bringing the technology into the 21st
21 century, integrated the voice and text and digital
22 platforms?

23 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: As far as
24 addressing a search in call volume, it would not help
25 much a day such as Tropical Storm Isaias, because

1
2 again, it's a personnel-- it's just having the
3 individuals sitting down being able to handle 911
4 calls. There's many benefits from Next Gen 911 such
5 as location, obtaining a perfect location basically
6 off the GPS of their phone. That perhaps can help--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing] That
8 should save some time, right, because then the--

9 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: [interposing]
10 Because we're able to--

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: [interposing]
12 caller doesn't have to--

13 DEPUTY CHIEF NAPOLITANO: [interposing]
14 see their location immediately. We will not spend as
15 much time trying to obtain it. So, in a way it
16 possibly can help a surge.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Okay. Thank you
18 very much. I appreciate your work. [inaudible]

19 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you, and I
20 see no one else has raised their hands for questions.
21 So, with that, we will dismiss this panel, and I want
22 to thank both of you and the other folks out there
23 very much for this. Josh has told me, our counselor
24 has told me there are two people signed up to
25

1 testify. So, Josh, will you ask them to identify
2 themselves and [inaudible].
3

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.

5 Thanks everyone. We're now turning to public
6 testimony. I'd like to remind everyone that unlike
7 in our typical council hearing we will be calling
8 individuals one by one to testify. Council Members
9 have questions for particular panelists, use the
10 raise hand function in Zoom, and I will call on you
11 after the panelist has completed their testimony.
12 For panelists, once your name is called, a member of
13 our staff will unmute you and you may begin
14 delivering testimony. So, as Council Member Borelli
15 mentioned, we have two individuals who have signed up
16 to testify. They are currently-- they should be
17 unmuted, and if you are-- there's a caller one and a
18 caller two who have not provided us with specific
19 phone numbers. So if you could identify yourself,
20 and then feel free begin discussing. I guess caller
21 one to start. Now, we only have one caller. Caller-
22 - is there an individual who just signed off as well.
23 So, it appears that both of those individuals who
24 signed up to testify have left the hearing. So,
25

1
2 Chair Borelli, I guess we could go back to you and
3 wrap things up.

4 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you, very,
5 very much. Council Member Holden, do you have any
6 closing remarks?

7 CHAIRPERSON HOLDEN: No, I want to thank
8 both the Commissioner and the Chief. By the way, the
9 Chief and I go way back when he was a Captain XO in
10 the precinct, our local precinct. It's nice to see
11 him, and you're looking well, and I want to thank you
12 both for your testimony, and I'm looking forward to
13 that tour, Commissioner of-- I want to see how fast
14 these people can text, because maybe like Superman or
15 something, but it sounds like it's an amazing job
16 that they're doing that all day. Thank you both, and
17 thank you Chair Borelli. I think it was a great
18 hearing. We've learned a lot, and I think we have
19 our preparation certainly for the next storm, which
20 might be coming, might be down in the tropics now.
21 We have to prepare, and I think the idea of doing
22 social media and alerting the Council offices that we
23 could educate constituents on obviously when we
24 talked before about what's a 311 call, what's a 911
25 call, and how can we help, help the-- obviously, the

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system, help everyone do their jobs better and just focus on city services. There was the breakdown we mentioned, especially we couldn't get answers to people's talking about downed trees. I know Commissioner Tisch will certainly address that and it won't happen again, but I want to thank you both for your testimony, and thank you Chair Borelli.

CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you everyone for participating, and with that, this will close out today's hearing.

[gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WITH
COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date September 26, 2020