

Committee On Fire & Emergency Management
Jointly with the Committee on Technology

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

Committee On Fire and Emergency Management
Jointly with the Committee on Technology

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December 13, 2022
Start: 10:12 AM
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HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Hon. Joann Ariola, Chair
Hon. Jennifer Gutiérrez, Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Shaun Abreu
David M. Carr
Carmen N. De La Rosa
Oswald Feliz
James F. Gennaro
Robert F. Holden
Vickie Paladino
Kevin C. Riley
Lynn C. Schulman
Julie Won
Kalman Yeger

Committee On Fire and Emergency Management
Jointly with the Committee on Technology
A P P E A R A N C E S

JP Augier,
Deputy Commissioner for Dispatch Operations and
Public Safety Technology at the New York City Fire
Department

Denise Werner,
Deputy Assistant Chief in Charge of Emergency
Medical Dispatch for New York City Fire Department

Robert Barbera,
Acting Deputy Commissioner, Public Safety &
Emergency Management at The Office of Technology and
Innovation (OTI)

Richard Allman,
Site Director at A. Philip Randolph Senior Center

Oren Barzilay,
President, FDNY EMS Local 2507

Bobby Eustace,
Vice President of the New York City Firefighters
Association

Faye Smyth,
President at Uniformed Fire Alarm Dispatchers
Benevolent Association

1
2 SERGEANT SADOWSKY: This a microphone check.
3 Today's date is December 13, 2022, on The Committees
4 on Technology jointly with Fire and Emergency
5 Management located in The Committee Room. Recorded by
6 Steven Sadowsky.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning, everyone, welcome
8 to today's New York City Council Hybrid Hearing of
9 The Committees on Fire and Emergency Management,
10 jointly with Technology.

11 To minimize disruptions, please place all
12 electronic devices to vibrate or silent mode.

13 If you wish to submit testimony, you may do so
14 via email to testimony@council.nyc.gov, again that is
15 testimony@council.nyc.gov.

16 Thank you, for your cooperation, everyone.
17 Chairs, we are ready to begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA:

19 [GAVELING IN] [GAVEL SOUND]

20 Good morning, I am Council Member Ariola, and I
21 am the chair to The Committee on Fire and Emergency
22 Management. Next to me is Council Member Gutiérrez,
23 Chair to The Committee on Technology. I want to
24 thank her for co-chairing this hearing today on the
25 Fire Department's Emergency Dispatch System.

2 I also want to thank representatives of the
3 administration as well as the public for attending
4 today's hearing.

5 Lastly, I would like to acknowledge those council
6 members who are currently present: Council Member
7 Robert Holden, via Zoom, and Council Member Vickie
8 Paladino here in The Committee Room.

9 As New Yorkers, we know that the operating of
10 emergency response services, within a densely
11 populate urban area, is extremely challenging. The
12 FDNY is constantly seeking methods to improve
13 responses to fire and medical emergencies and to
14 ensure lifesaving services are promptly delivered as
15 needed.

16 During today's hearing, we want to learn about
17 how the department has incorporated innovations and
18 technology in their firefighting and emergency
19 medical dispatch systems. We are interested in
20 examining the Fire Department's recent upgrade to its
21 computer aided dispatch system and the various
22 subsystems that accept, route, and answer fire and
23 emergency medical calls.

24 We hope to examine how these technological
25 improvements will help save lives of New Yorkers and

1
2 create a better system of dispatch services for those
3 who are seeking help -- as well as those operating
4 emergency dispatch systems and services.

5 Additionally, the committee will focus on how and
6 what type of training the department provides to both
7 new and experienced personnel. Our goal is to ensure
8 that the City's response to emergencies is
9 expeditious and avoids any unnecessary disruption in
10 answering and dispatching emergency calls.

11 Again, thank you all for being here. I would now
12 like to turn it over to Council Member Gutiérrez for
13 her opening statement.

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Chair.

15 Good morning, I am Council Member Jennifer
16 Gutiérrez, and I am Chair of The Committee on
17 Technology.

18 I am happy to join my colleague, Chair Ariola, in
19 holding this joint hearing on the New York City Fire
20 Department's Emergency Dispatch System.

21 The New York City Fire Department is the largest
22 fire department in the US, and the second largest in
23 the world. About 11,000 firefighters and 6,000
24 civilian employees, including 4,000 emergency medical
25

1 service workers serve some 8.5 million New Yorkers,
2 24-7, throughout all five boroughs.

3
4 According to the City's open data portal, in 2021
5 FDNY responded to approximately 300,000 incidents,
6 including about 11,000 structural fires and 9,000 non
7 structural fires. Because of its role and
8 significant scale, the New York City Fire Department
9 's emergency dispatch system is one of the most
10 important technological tools used by FDNY and
11 arguably one of the most important in the City.

12 The department utilizes one computer aided
13 dispatch -- or CAD -- system, for fire related
14 incidents, and another computer aided dispatch
15 system, known as EMSCAD, for medical incidents.

16 Last year FDNY replaced its 45-year-old StarFire
17 CAD system that had been used for fire incidents,
18 with a new system called FireCAD, which was developed
19 to bring a myriad of benefits that include an
20 intuitive interface, expedited data retrieval,
21 enhanced security with compatibility with NextGen 9-
22 1-1.

23 However, no system is perfect, and agency
24 technological tools are not exempt from issues like
25 bugs and human errors. In fact, just this February,

1 it was reported that FireCAD had three unexpected
2 outages since its August 2021 launch resulting in a
3 total of one hour and 13 minute of down time. While
4 over that same time period, EMSCAD experienced three
5 separate unexpected outages which lasted a total of
6 four hours and 30 minutes. And recently, in October,
7 human error shutdown FDNY's emergency dispatch system
8 causing an outage lasting appropriately 90 minutes
9 and rendering dispatchers unable to use its digital
10 systems to contact first responders throughout the
11 day. Fortunately, no one seems to have been harmed.

12 The Office of Technology and Innovation, or OTI,
13 which now represents all technological agencies in
14 New York City is responsible for assisting City
15 agencies with technology and telecommunication
16 services. With respect to emergency systems, OTI has
17 duties related to information technology and
18 telecommunication matters or at the request of the
19 agency.
20

21 In previous hearings, OTI has testified that they
22 will have oversight on all major technology related
23 contracts in the City -- regardless of whether they
24 were executed prior to this current administration,
25

1 so we are looking forward to their insights here as
2 well.
3

4 Today we hope to learn more about the emergency
5 dispatch system, preventing future life threatening
6 outages, and improving current technologies at FDNY -
7 - tools that keep New Yorkers safe.

8 I am looking forward to hearing testimony from
9 the New York City Fire Department, The Office of
10 Technology and Innovation community advocates, and
11 experts.

12 And before moving on, I would like to acknowledge
13 Council Member Sean Abreu and Council Member Carr for
14 joining us this morning.

15 That's it, I would like to now turn it over to
16 our committee counsel for administrative [BACKGROUND
17 NOISE] proceedings.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair Gutiérrez.
19 And good morning, everyone. Today we will be hearing
20 testimony from New York City Fire Department, Chief
21 Denise Werner; and Deputy Commissioner JP Augier; and
22 Robert Barbera from The Office of Technology and
23 Innovation.

24 And, now, I would like you to raise your right
25 hand.

2 Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth and to
3 respond honestly to council member questions?

4 [ADMINISTRATION AFFIRMS]

5 Thank you, you can begin your testimony.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Good morning.

7 Good morning Chair Ariola, Chair Gutierrez, and
8 all council members present. My name is JP Augier,
9 and I am the Deputy Commissioner for Dispatch
10 Operations and Public Safety Technology at the New
11 York City Fire Department. I am joined here today by
12 my colleague, Denise Werner, who is our Deputy
13 Assistant Chief in Charge of Emergency Medical
14 Dispatch. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with
15 you about the Fire Department's emergency dispatch
16 system.

17 New York City's 9-1-1 system is by far the
18 largest system in the country if not the world. The
19 processing of emergency calls is a collaborative
20 effort between The Police Department and The Fire
21 Department. Police Communications Technicians answer
22 every call and direct them to police, fire, or EMS
23 dispatchers based on the nature of the call. The Fire
24 Department receives and processes approximately 1.8

1 million calls each year for fire, medical, or other
2 emergencies requiring Fire Department activity.
3

4 Calls to 9-1-1 enter the system through one of
5 the City's to Public Safety Answering Centers. The
6 first is PSAC I, is located at MetroTech center in
7 downtown Brooklyn. The second, PSAC II, is at the
8 Pelham Parkway section of the Bronx. The centers
9 themselves are examples of highly secure
10 environments, each mirroring the other in emergency
11 dispatch capabilities for all five boroughs and
12 designed to provide continued 9-1-1 services, even in
13 the direst of circumstances, our City may face.

14 Similarly, the activities of the City employees, who
15 work inside - members of the Police Department, The
16 Fire Department, and The Office of Technology and
17 Innovation (OTI) - provide multiple layers of
18 operational redundancy, which ensures that their
19 life-saving work will continue when faced with
20 potential technological or human disruptions. This is
21 true of the physical components of the system, as
22 well as the processes by which the members complete
23 their work. My testimony today will focus on FDNY's s
24 portion of the system, which handles calls related to
25 fire and emergency medical incidents or emergencies.

1
2 Broadly speaking, the FDNY's 9-1-1
3 infrastructure consists of three integrated systems:
4 Call handling, computer aided dispatch (CAD), and
5 radio. Each of these components includes multiple
6 subsystems that support various aspects of FDNY 9-1-
7 1. Fire, dispatch, and EMS dispatch utilize separate
8 CAD systems, each designed, to serve their respective
9 missions. Both are hosted on the New York City Public
10 Safety Network, which is managed by our partners at
11 OTI. Working closely with colleagues at NYC Cyber
12 Command, the FDNY systems have been layered with
13 security measures and are monitored around the clock.
14 The Fire Department maintains a high level of
15 resiliency by ensuring that we are redundant and
16 diverse across all critical aspects of the FDNY 9-1-1
17 system. We upgrade systems and subsystems on a
18 continuum, making sure that we stay current and ahead
19 of a shifting threat landscape.

20 With regard to emergency medical dispatch, the
21 EMS CAD was originally launched in 1977 and has
22 received several version upgrades over its lifespan,
23 the latest occurring in 2017. This legacy system is
24 now slated for a replacement to achieve greater
25 system availability, increased functionality, and an

1 architecture compatible with Next-Generation 9-1-1 .

2 I am happy to report that work is underway on the EMS
3 CAD replacement process. The department has begun
4 documenting technical and functional requirements for
5 the new system and we expect the development to begin
6 early next year.

7
8 With regard to fire alarm dispatch, the Fire CAD
9 system is a new system. When it was launched in
10 August 2021, it replaced StarFire a 45-year-old
11 legacy processor. Fire CAD is superior to its
12 predecessor in every way, providing the FDNY with the
13 premier CAD system in use anywhere in the world
14 today. Its performance has been exceptional, but as
15 with any new system it has not been without issue. We
16 experienced a few challenges early on that we were
17 quick to remedy and highlight, though some
18 circumstances, the issues were misinterpreted in the
19 media. I am grateful to have an opportunity today to
20 discuss the system today, and I want to take this
21 moment to highlight the redundancies and safeguards
22 that are built into FDNY 9-1-1.

23 There are many reasons that a 9-1-1 system may
24 experience service interruptions including surging,
25 call volume, technical failures, or human error.

1 Often, downtime is our plan to conduct maintenance or
2 to make software adjustments to the system. Not all
3 interruptions require dispatch operations to be moved
4 off primary systems; however, when that happens, we
5 experienced delays in dispatch, processing, and
6 response. Whether an interruption is planned or
7 unplanned, 9-1-1 system administrators, anticipate
8 these occurrences and have developed robust
9 procedures, and backup systems that can be acted upon
10 at a moment's notice. Through vigilant planning,
11 preparedness, and comprehensive training the
12 dedicated men and women of FDNY dispatch operations
13 and information technology work tirelessly to minimize
14 interruptions, downtimes, and latencies.

16 A recent high-profile interruption to FDNY
17 dispatch operations -- the incident that prompted
18 today's hearing -- occurred on October 12th of this
19 year at PSAC I in Brooklyn. Two technicians from a
20 trusted New York City contractor were admitted to a
21 building to troubleshoot an issue involving the link
22 between the FDNY Datacenter and the department's
23 offsite Disaster Recovery Datacenter, which is
24 currently under development. One technician worked in
25 the basement at the technology point of entry, and

1
2 the other technician worked with the FDNY datacenter,
3 which is in a secure room on an upper floor.

4 The datacenter, like all other datacenters,
5 contains an Emergency Power Off function. This
6 function exists so that if a circumstance ever arose,
7 where first responders needed to access the room - -
8 say, a fire, or a flood - - the entire power system,
9 could be shut off quickly for their safety. To
10 activate the emergency power off sequence, a person
11 must depress two different buttons each separately
12 shielded and enclosed in a hardened protective
13 housing that is labeled "EPO" for "Emergency Power
14 Off".

15 At approximately 11:00 A. M. when the technician
16 working in the data center attempted to exit the
17 secure room and had difficulty opening the door, he
18 wrongly assumed that the door was electronic and that
19 he needed to push a button. He removed the hard and
20 protective cover of the first button marked EPO and
21 pressed it. When he did not release a door as he
22 expected, he inexplicably removed the protective
23 cover from the second EPO button and pressed that as
24 well. As a result, all power was removed from the
25

1 data center, the adjacent monitoring room, and the
2 radio room.
3

4 By design, this emergency power removal included
5 all auxiliary power sources, such as the battery
6 backups and generator power. The fire CAD system with
7 its updated design and built-in redundancies,
8 automatically transferred to operating from PSAC II
9 in the Bronx with no downtime or latency and remained
10 up and operational for the duration of the incident.
11 However, EMS space CAD, did experience an outage, due
12 to it, being an older system, far less agile, and
13 lacking the same innovative backup as its fire
14 counterpart. EMS CAD does not have the capability for
15 an automatic transfer to PSAC II such a transfer
16 would require human intervention.

17 FDNY's Bureau of Information Technology
18 immediately became aware of the issue, as several
19 systems lost power or were affected as a byproduct of
20 the power outage. Members of the bureau quickly
21 assembled onsite (many work directly across the
22 street) and met with building engineers at OTI to
23 determine the root cause of the interruption. The EMS
24 CAD team simultaneously moved the CAD for PSAC I
25 server to the PSAC II server and began bringing the

1 CAD back online. Upon investigation, the building
2 engineer is interruption to the activation of the
3 Emergency Power Off function. They systematically
4 restored power to the datacenter one section at a
5 time. Technicians worked to methodically bring FDNY
6 9-1-1 systems back online, in a sequence, to
7 minimize issues and downtime at the most critical
8 infrastructure.
9

10 While this interruption was unexpected and
11 presented challenges, the layers of redundancy and
12 diversity that are built into the FDNY 9-1-1 system
13 did the job they were designed to do. Every primary
14 critical system that was knocked off offline in the
15 morning was immediately mitigated with a technical or
16 operational alternative. Within minutes, all
17 dispatchers were functioning on our secondary radio
18 system. EMS dispatchers quickly pivoted to the manual
19 processes for which they train on a regular basis.
20 Field units communicated with dispatchers via the
21 radio. As a result, all 9-1-1 calls for fire,
22 medical, or other emergencies were answered, and
23 resources were dispatched.

24 We never want to experience unexpected outages,
25 but we train for them so that when they inevitably

1 occur, we are prepared and able to deal with them.

2
3 When we take the system offline for a planned outage,
4 we intentionally staff up to provide additional
5 resources and give more individuals an opportunity to
6 experience those backup protocols in a controlled
7 environment. We drill on those procedures, and we
8 ensure that when there is an interruption, the risk
9 is minimized, and we are able to solve the problem
10 and return to normal service as quickly as possible.

11 We have worked with OTI to put additional
12 safeguards in place at the EPO buttons themselves,
13 including more expressive signage and an alarm to
14 avoid such grievous errors from reoccurring in the
15 future.

16 In this incident, the FDNY teams were involved in
17 restoration did a exceedingly well to assess the
18 situation, manage the incident, and implement
19 restoration protocols that ultimately brought all
20 primary systems back up as quickly as possible.
21 Systems that were co-located and set up for automatic
22 failover did so seamlessly. For as much as an outage
23 like this was disruptive, it was a positive outcome
24 that the systems in place performed as they did.

1 We will continue making changes to improve our
2 systems, and we will continue training for all
3 possibilities, so that we are ready to face any
4 development, no matter how unlikely.

5 Again, I'm grateful for this opportunity to speak
6 with you all today and happy to take your questions
7 at this time.

8 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Before we begin with the
9 questions, I would just like to acknowledge that
10 Council Member Yeger, Council Member De La Rosa,
11 Council Member Riley have joined us.

12 So, I want to thank you for that comprehensive
13 testimony. And although our questions may seem
14 redundant to what you have already said, I think it
15 is important that we break it down for the public who
16 is listening and the public who are here in the room.

17 So, some of our questions may be what has already
18 been answered, but I think it will be easier to...
19 for people to digest if they hear it broken down.

20 So, I just would like to start with, uhm, with...
21 What type of training have fire dispatchers received
22 on the relatively new FireCAD system? How much hour
23 of training have they received, and what was the
24 feedback from the dispatchers?
25

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, I have to double
3 back just... I agree with your statement, and I
4 think we are going to be very redundant with a lot of
5 this... (CROSS-TALK)

6 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Mm-hmm

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: information.

8 Uh, I am going to answer that question, but then
9 I... I would like to maybe also give you an
10 understanding of the differences between the two
11 CADS, because it is going to get a little conflated
12 when we are having... (CROSS-TALK)

13 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Good.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: a conversation.

15 So, right now, you just referenced training with
16 regard to FireCAD, which is really the fire side of
17 the house for FDNY.

18 Uh, the training that our dispatchers underwent,
19 I mean, that.. In total do date, since we launched
20 in August of 2021, is roughly about 65 hours each.
21 That was initially broken up, it was five 8-hour days
22 initially. And then we have refreshers before
23 cutover. And, then, after cutover, we had sessions
24 while they were in-service training, and then we also
25 had additional training to update dispatchers on any

1 changes that may have happened ,you know, have
2 occurred in the code or functionality.
3

4 Do you mind if I just go and just tell you just a
5 little bit about the CAD systems?

6 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Please do.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And, so actually
8 more about the dispatch operation, because CAD is
9 really just one little piece of it. Right?

10 So, the Fire Department's most valued and
11 reliable resource is our people. And we have built a
12 support system around them -- in all aspects of the
13 FDNY. So, that is not any different for dispatch
14 operations.

15 And, so, for dispatchers, ,you know, we...
16 Because they are the most reliable resource for us,
17 we had built a support system around them. We have
18 layered all of their activities and tasks with
19 technology with protocols and procedures, so that
20 they can best achieve success in their mission.
21 Right? So, let's just define the mission: Their
22 mission is to take a 9-1-1 call, and to take it all
23 of the way through until we can put the appropriate
24 resource -- whether it be fire or medical -- in front
25

1 of a New Yorker who needs that help. Right? And
2 they have to do this 24/7.
3

4 And, so, linearly, like, this is a chain of
5 events. And, there are an awful lot of things that
6 happen in that chain of events.

7 If I broke that chain into three sections, into
8 thirds, we would be talking about that call taking
9 piece -- the call handling piece -- then we would be
10 talking about that CAD section, the dispatching
11 section, and then we would be talking about the radio
12 or the communications piece, which is between the
13 dispatchers and the field units that are actually
14 arriving on the scene.

15 So, if we look at that middle section, at that
16 CAD section, we break up into two arenas -- the fire
17 side of the house with FireCAD, that is specifically
18 designed for their mission, because they have a very
19 different business; and then we have the EMSCAD.
20 While EMSCAD is a legacy CAD, and it needs to be
21 replaced, it has still been designed specifically for
22 their mission.

23 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And was there any feedback?
24 Do you collect feedback from...
25

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, sorry. So, uh,
3 in terms of the training, the training team from Fire
4 Alarm Dispatch was responsible for training the
5 workforce. Those individuals were also the people
6 that we involved in the development of the project.
7 And, so, I think it is actually important to
8 highlight, and I think why the FireCAD project was
9 such a success, is that involved our end-users from
10 day one. Right? And I don't mean from day one from
11 the build, we involved all of our end-users, and we
12 gave them a seat at the table during ,you know,
13 during the conceptual phase, ideation, and
14 implementation, all the way through until now, they
15 have been involved. And, because their voice was
16 heard, their requirements were heard and then met.
17 That training team was part of that entire process.
18 And, so, they were actually tasked with training
19 their workforce up. The feedback has been
20 tremendous. They are very happy with the performance
21 of the system, and, uh, they are very happy to have a
22 new CAD in place.

23 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: So, how old is the current
24 EMSCAD system? And does the department currently
25 plan to upgrade the system?

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: The current EMSCAD
3 system was 1997, which predates the merger -- the
4 fire department merger in the early mid 90's. It has
5 undergone several versions and ,you know, upgrades.
6 I want to say it was, uh, 1977 they launched it;
7 there was an upgrade in 1981, I believe; 1987; again
8 in 2006; and then the most recent being in 2017. It
9 has served this department and the City as a whole
10 well. But, like all good things, it is ready to be
11 replaced, because of the architecture, it is, uh,
12 older technology. And we do have a plan, too.

13 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Alright, and do you believe
14 that there any additional improvements made to the
15 current CAD system that would really help it
16 currently -- protect our city?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: New functionality?

18 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Mm-hmm

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, and, so there
20 is always going to be new functionality. Right?
21 Business process is always evolving and changing. The
22 landscape in the City evolves and changes. Right?
23 And, so, how we respond to emergencies needs to
24 evolve and change as well.

25 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Mm-hmm

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: But, the good thing
3 about the FireCAD versus its predecessor, is the
4 architecture in which we built it. For one, it's IP
5 based. Right? So, it will be compatible with Next-
6 Generation 9-1-1. But, the architecture itself is
7 very loosely coupled. And what I mean by that is,
8 like, all of the individual pieces of that
9 application are not heavily dependent upon one
10 another to function properly. That also means that
11 as we need to build in new functionality, as the
12 business changes for the Fire Department, we can, and
13 we can do it with relative ease.

14 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay, and you... You, in
15 your testimony, you mentioned some robust procedures
16 and backup plans. Do dispatchers still rely on
17 Cardex (sp?) as their backup, uh, when there is a
18 break in the system? And, if so, can you explain that
19 process?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I can, so, what is
21 throwing me off a little bit about that question,
22 only is because you mentioned Cardex (sp?), and that
23 is very specific to EMSCAD and their process...

24 (CROSS-TALK)

25 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, I am just going
3 to... I will pivot to EMSCAD and [INAUDIBLE] that...

4 (CROSS-TALK)

5 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: That is fine, mm-hmm.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And, then I could
7 actually ask Chief Werner to tell you a little bit
8 about Cardex.

9 So, when I mentioned earlier, that middle section
10 of the process, was the two CAD systems. When we are
11 looking at the EMSCAD system, there is a whole bunch
12 of activities and tasks that happen in there from
13 call to dispatch to on scene. And, part of that is
14 the call to dispatch piece we have a computer triage
15 algorithm, it is separate from the CAD systems. So,
16 I do not want to conflate them. Right?

17 The police dispatcher answers a call; the police
18 dispatcher interrogates the caller, understands it is
19 a medical call, takes, uh, basic information, and
20 then conferences in EMS Dispatch. And, then an EMS
21 call taker now is on the line. That person is a
22 trained emergency medical technician. And so, they
23 begin triaging the call with the caller -- if the
24 caller is the patient, or in some cases it is a
25 bystander who is calling on behalf of the caller.

1
2 Either way, they triage the patient. And, to do so,
3 in the past, historically we used something called a
4 Cardex (sp?), which was a very large rolodex, so to
5 speak, and dispatchers would ask a question, and
6 whatever answer they got it prompted them to go to
7 another section of the rolodex and ask another
8 question. We have since replaced that with a
9 computerized triage algorithm. And, so, now
10 dispatchers actually just follow along on the screen
11 entering the answers. And, what that did for us was
12 give us a more accurate sizing up of these calls when
13 we needed to categorize them and prioritize them.

14 So, we do not Cardex (sp?), I will say, though,
15 they are present, because while we rely on technology
16 to help our dispatchers, we do not only rely on the
17 technology in front of them. And, so, that is a
18 redundancy in itself. But, if you want to explain
19 some of the Cardex?

20 CHIEF WERNER: Right, so, we are using the
21 computerized triage application to triage the calls.
22 In an event where the network was not operational,
23 computerized triage lives locally on the desktop, so
24 they are still able to use that. In the time that I

1
2 have been at Emergency Medical Dispatch, we have not
3 had to revert back to the Cardex.

4 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay, thank you.

5 And, just my final question before I turn the mic
6 over to Chair Gutiérrez, this past October, as you
7 testified, a private contractor servicing the
8 department's dispatch center, mistakenly triggered a
9 shutdown button, which seemed like kind of , like,
10 pretty specific, and I am so glad that you really
11 detailed how and why it happened. But, how has the
12 department improved security to prevent such an
13 occurrence from happening again?

14 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: So, I mean, well we
15 reiterated a lot of ,you know, existing security
16 measures in terms of ,you know, who we are checking
17 in and who we are checking out. But, in terms of
18 those EPO buttons, ,you know, we have worked with OTI
19 and the buildings themselves to ensure that we had
20 better signage. We put an alarm on it. It is a very
21 difficult to account for all levels of intelligence.
22 What had happened on that day, uh, was an egregious
23 error. But, uh, and, so, yes, we have taken steps.

24 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay, thank you so much.

25 I will now turn to Chair Gutiérrez.

1 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, Chair Ayala.

2 And, thank you for your testimony and for
3 clarifying, I think very vividly kind of what
4 occurred that day in October.

5 I want to ask, uh, a couple of questions related
6 to, uh, FireCAD as a vendor.

7 My first question is, can you confirm the budget
8 for FireCAD?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, the project
10 budget was roughly \$22 million.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm, okay. And, are
12 there any anticipated maintenance costs annually?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, yes, so, we have
14 a five-year contract, it is \$5 million annually. That
15 includes support for infrastructure, uhm,
16 applications and maintenance, which would include
17 patching and security measures.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm, okay.

19 You mentioned earlier that actual dispatchers
20 were involved in the development process, correct?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, ma'am.

22 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

23 Now, when selecting the vendor, uhm, what vendor
24 did you end up utilizing to develop FireCAD?
25

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Accenture was
3 awarded the contract.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Accenture? Okay...
5 (CROSS-TALK)

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Accenture, yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And, were they, uhm, are
8 they a vendor who has done business with the City
9 before -- Accenture?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I believe they have
11 done work with the City before. Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. What were some of
13 the qualifications that you were looking for?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, we had compiled
15 functional and technical requirements prior to an RFP
16 process.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And that was
19 solicited, I believe that was an S I contract through
20 OTI - formally DoITT. And so that went out onto the
21 street, and, uh, Accenture was one of the vendors who
22 responded.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

24 Was there anything... anything specifically that
25 you were looking for?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Well, we were
3 specifically looking for a company to meet our
4 requirements... (CROSS-TALK)

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Our functional and
7 our technical requirements.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Uhm... (CROSS-TALK)

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And, to do so with
10 state of the art technology. You know, contemporary
11 technology that would be compatible for Next-
12 Generation 9-1-1.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm.

14 What was OTI's involvement in the contract, in
15 the vendor selection?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, OTI manages the,
17 uhm, ,you know, enterprise procurement vehicles for
18 things like that. And, so, they do that for all city
19 agencies or many city agencies. And, so while they
20 manage the procurement vehicle... (CROSS-TALK)

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: The actual RFP
23 process was mainly run by FDNY with a DoITT
24 presence... or OTI presence.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Sure. And, so, they had, I
3 guess it sounds like they had very minimal
4 involvement in selecting the vendor?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: In the selection
6 process? (CROSS-TALK)

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Correct.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: The selections were
11 made by our IT experts and our Bureau of
12 Communications -- our end-users.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it.

14 And, so, I think... And, the next couple of
15 questions, uhm, for me, I can certainly emphasize
16 with the fact that... And appreciate, that ,you
17 know, a 40 plus year-old system needed to be
18 upgraded, and that was the decision made to invest
19 \$22 million in this new FireCAD system, and, uhm,
20 again, certainly can appreciate that -- things do go
21 wrong.

22 I just want to... And, I also just want to point
23 to, in your testimony, you shared that ,you know, in
24 some of these cases, the media kind of did not have
25 all of the information. And we want to use this

1
2 opportunity to dispel some of that and really get a
3 sense of what happened.

4 So, I have, uh, just based on media coverage, I
5 have, I believe it is three incidents of outages.
6 If you could just confirm that the dates are at least
7 correct? So, I have October 4th and November 7th of
8 2021?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: (NO RESPONSE)

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And, then I have
11 Valentine's Day of 2022.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Okay, so, sorry, I am
13 prepared to speak on... I took a look back for the
14 last 12 month but... (CROSS-TALK)

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, but... But can you
16 give me... (CROSS-TALK)

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I can... But,
18 [INAUDIBLE] we are talking about FireCAD?

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes, but I just... Well,
20 I... If you cannot confirm that dates, that's fine.
21 But, you can confirm that there have been... (CROSS-
22 TALK)

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, so... (CROSS-
24 TALK)

25 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: multiple outages?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, in the last 12
3 months, we have had two periods of down time for
4 FireCAD.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Two? Okay... (CROSS-
6 TALK)

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Two. One was a
8 planned... (CROSS-TALK)

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And, one was
11 unplanned.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Oklahoma City, OK

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Uhm, I will say the
14 other ones that you are referencing happened very
15 early on in our cut-over.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Which is to be
18 expected with any piece of technology like this. Uh,
19 if there was a bit of a burn-in period, that, uhm,
20 the last twelve months, we had one planned and one
21 unplanned. [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-TALK)

22 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, but...

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: For a total downtime
24 of... Would you like a downtime? For a total

1 downtime of... One was four minutes, the other was
2
3 30 minutes.

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, and these were the
5 unplanned ones? Or are you referring to all of them
6 -- planned and unplanned?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: The unplanned was
8 four minutes, and the planned was 30 minutes.

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, uhm, so based on
10 this, what you are able to share, what was the cause
11 of the planned (sic)... the unplanned outage. If you
12 can share that?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, the unplanned
14 was a case of human error or the tech-ops side of
15 FDNY.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

17 And, then, is there any information that you can
18 share as far as, like, under StarFire, what were
19 their outages that occurred, uhm, often, annually, is
20 there any of that, that you can share how often they
21 happened or... (CROSS-TALK)

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I... I'd be happy
23 to get you real numbers. I could just say to you
24 antidotally, and having been around as long as I

1 have, an awful lot. It was as very old... (CROSS-
2 TALK)
3

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: An awful lot? Okay...
5 (CROSS-TALK)

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: system.

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. Uh... (CROSS-TALK)

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And when I say that
9 it... It is not just the application itself. Right?
10 It was some of the periphery that it touches was old
11 as well, and it needed to be updated.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it. I mean, I think
13 for... for us, we want to be ensured that
14 whatever... What... Whatever... That we are
15 learning from what went wrong with StarFire. So, you
16 are saying outages happened an awful lot? We want to
17 move away from... Well, obviously we want to move
18 beyond that under FireCAD.

19 I just have a couple of more questions before I
20 pass it back.

21 Uh, so, in your testimony, during that October
22 crash, you mentioned that ,you know, obviously the...
23 The protocols in place are obviously airtight, so
24 folks were able to... dispatchers were able to kind
25 of move beyond the outage. Uh, and then you

1 mentioned that that... They went back to a manual
2 process? Is that... Can you explain a little bit
3 about what that looks like for a dispatcher?
4

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Sure. So... (CROSS-
6 TALK)

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: In that second...

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: If you don't mind,
9 can I just bring this all back to where I started
10 with this change... (CROSS-TALK)

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: The sandwich? I got it.
12 I am ready... (CROSS-TALK)

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Okay, so, again, I
14 asked to envision this as a linear... like a chain.
15 Right? And, there is a link, many links in this
16 chain. And, within each of those links, there are
17 activities and tasks that need to happen in order to
18 get from that call... (CROSS-TALK)

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: to getting somebody
21 on scene. Within each of those links, we have a
22 primary means of doing those activities and those
23 tasks. We also have redundancy. We have backup ways
24 of doing that same thing. And in some cases, it is a
25 completely different method, and that's where we get

1 our diversity. Right? And so, each one of these
2 links has a primary, a secondary, and in some cases a
3 third or a fourth layer of redundancy built in. And,
4 so when we have an issue with a primary section in
5 one of those links of activities, and we fail over to
6 a redundancy, what we are doing essentially is a risk
7 management dance. Right? We asses risk, we want to
8 minimize risk, because the overarching goal -- and we
9 defined the goal -- was call comes in, we need to get
10 a resource to a New Yorker. And if one of those
11 links break, we don't get a resource to the caller.
12 Right? And, so we have multiple layers of
13 technology, multiple protocols and procedures built
14 in to each one these links -- all the way down to the
15 most basic technology. Right? So, our technologies
16 will range from the most basic -- like a pen and a
17 piece of paper -- and all the way up to ,you know,
18 very complex code or an algorithms or ,you know,
19 radio infrastructure and so on and so forth.

21 And, so, when you talk about going manual, we are
22 not talking about doing the full length of this chain
23 manually. And, like, you know, and I have heard it
24 stated, like, Oh, FDNY is on paper. And I think
25 sometimes folks envision like, uhm, Wall Street with

1 like a million people running around with paper.
2
3 Right? And it is not that case. It is that one of
4 those links in that middle section for CAD and
5 dispatch, requires a manual process. And, what I
6 would like to do is ask Chief Werner to actually
7 explain to you what that manual process is. Because
8 it is not the full processing of emergency call...

9 (CROSS-TALK)

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Sure.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: It is only a small
12 piece.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

14 CHIEF WERNER: So, on October 12th, our
15 computerized triaged algorithm was still operational.
16 We were able to use it offline. So, the call takers
17 were allowed to... were able to continue to triage
18 the calls by our call type as well as the priority.
19 Our telephone system was also operational; they were
20 able to receive calls from the police operators. The
21 police operators -- or the caller, if there is one on
22 the line -- will give the call taker the information
23 such as the borough of the address, the nature of the
24 emergency, the telephone callback number; the police
25 operator also acquires some of this information in

1 the event that the caller hangs up before connecting
2 to us, we can get that from the police operator.
3

4 So, during a system outage, where we are relying
5 on the information obtained by the call taker, they
6 also get from the police operator what is called an
7 ADAM. So, an ADAM is a geographical area within a
8 precinct, and it corresponds to the ADAM within our
9 CAD system and is also corresponding to maps that we
10 can use in the event if we are not able to use the
11 CAD system. So, having that information enables a
12 dispatcher to narrow down an area and have... They
13 also have displayed on their map the units that are
14 responsible for the coverage in that area. So, that
15 is how the call will be processed.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, when we go to
17 paper, what are we doing?

18 CHIEF WERNER: Well, we record all the information
19 on what is called an IRF card. It is an Incident
20 Report Card, it is in quadruple copy; one copy stays
21 in the call taker room; another copy goes to the
22 dispatcher; another copy goes to FAD - Fire Alarm
23 Dispatchers in the event that this call requires a
24 CFR response; and the last copy is a reference copy
25 which would stay with the supervisors.

1
2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, that... Just to
3 echo the chief's remarks, the piece of that process
4 is really the handoff between our triage folks, who
5 are taking that informant... that triage information
6 from a caller and getting the location. It is the
7 handoff from them to the dispatch floor -- that is
8 the only piece-- and, so, it is recorded on paper,
9 because we no longer have that connection to the CAD.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you, uh, my last
11 question, I have more, but for now, my last question
12 is related to, uh, in that instance, because
13 something that we are talking a lot about here at the
14 council is the obvious staff shortages that we have
15 across the agency.

16 So, the reason that I asked about the manual
17 piece was not... not because I assumed there was
18 just reams of paper all over at these dispatch
19 centers. My concern is about staffing. Right? And,
20 so, in these instances, I think... my belief is we
21 should always be prepared for the worst, even if
22 FireCAD is ramped and it is perfect, uh, and it is as
23 close to perfect as possible, so can you describe if
24 there is... you can also confirm if there is a
25 staffing shortage for dispatchers, and kind of

1 what... What is the anticipation in this instance if
2 we do run into staff shortages? And, kind of how
3 will that protocol continued to be supported?
4

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, we agree with
6 you. Right? So, any time that we have to failover
7 to any layer of redundancy inherently it does, uh,
8 create delays. And, so, we want to have more
9 recourses available. And, so, Chief Werner and her
10 team ensure that, at least during regular business
11 hours when these things occur, we have administrative
12 staff that are trained dispatchers, but are working
13 in administrative functions typically. When there is
14 any piece of that system that fails over, the
15 administrative staff ceases to conduct their regular
16 daily duties, and they actually staff the floor --
17 and, so, our staffing numbers go up. It mirrors what
18 we do during our planned outages, and I think this is
19 worth saying, because we will have planned downtime,
20 especially for a legacy system like EMSCAD where we
21 have to update software, uh, or push a patch, we will
22 bring the system down, but when we do that, that
23 small piece of dispatch that we talked about, they
24 will go to paper. But, these are planned. And, so,
25 we take advantage of that planned downtime. And, so,

1 Chief Werner will staff up ,you know, we would do
2 this typically in the middle of the night when call
3 volume is low, we will staff up the dispatch centers,
4 uh, so that there are extra recourses there. And,
5 when we select our staff, we select folks that maybe
6 have not had a lot of experience working with these
7 backup protocols. And, so, it is an opportunity to
8 train them and put them into a controlled
9 environment. So, when we do run into cases, uh, when
10 we have to use our administrative staff, they can
11 quickly augment who we have on shift and find
12 success.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I have one more question.
15 I lied, is that okay?

16 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: That's fine.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: So, sorry.

18 I also just want to recognize Council Member
19 Feliz and Council Member Gennaro who is on Zoom, I
20 believe, right?

21 So, my next... My last question is related to
22 kind of the relationship with OTI. And, I just...
23 If you could share with me, do you all have , like,
24 an IT Unit? What does that look like if you do or if
25

1
2 you do not, or what happens in the instance where you
3 need some technical support? Thank you.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, sure.

5 So, our relation with OTI, it is actually a trio,
6 uh, the New York City Police Department, The Fire
7 Department, and OTI -- formally DoITT. We all are
8 part of IT Public Safety Governance Group. And, so,
9 we work very closely with both of those teams. Both
10 P. D. and The Fire Department have very robust IT
11 shops. And, so we synchronize up quite well with
12 OTI.

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: But do you have someone
14 inhouse?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: We do.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: You do? And, it is
17 specific to the FDNY? So, you have an IT team...

18 (CROSS-TALK)

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: We... Yes....

20 (CROSS-TALK)

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: similar to any division
22 [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-TALK)

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: so, that is what I
24 meant by that. So, NYPD and The Fire Department
25 both have... (CROSS-TALK)

2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Fantastic.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: internal IT
4 bureaus... (CROSS-TALK)

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And, they work hand
7 in hand with OTI Public Safety.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, thank you so much.

9 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you, Chair.

10 And, I just want to just continue in the vein
11 with Fire And Emergency Management Dispatchers.

12 Currently, what is the total number of Fire And
13 Emergency Medical Dispatchers working in the
14 department -- on any specific shift?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, are you asking
16 for a headcount of shift? So, on shift, for...

17 (CROSS-TALK)

18 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay, for headcount first,
19 and then... (CROSS-TALK)

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Sure...

21 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: and then on shift...

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Okay...

23 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Please if you have it.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I will tell you for
25 Fire Alarm Dispatch -- and just forgive me, because I

1 am going to try to find it in my notes -- but for
2 Fire Alarm Dispatch, we have 35 dispatchers, five
3 supervisors, and two chief dispatchers per shift.
4 And, they work, uh, 12-hour shifts.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: 12-hour?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes. I believe our
8 headcount, or our budgeting headcount is 207. And we
9 are about... Or, we are at 197 today.

10 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And, when the trainings are
11 given, uhm, are the Fire dispatchers and the EMS
12 dispatchers in one training class or one room, or is
13 it done separately?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: They are completely
15 separate disciplines. And, so there are training
16 units for each, and they train separately. There are
17 not any pieces of technology other than the call
18 handling -- the telephony side -- that they share.

19 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And, just remind me, how many
20 hours training do they receive? Was it 65?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: The Fire Alarm
22 Dispatchers have received... (CROSS-TALK)

23 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And E... And EMS.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Uh, well, for
25 training for EMS? I could tell you the Fire Alarm

1 Dispatchers to date, since the new system is in play,
2 they have each received approximately 65 hours.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Sixty-five? And, do you
5 believe that is sufficient to... (CROSS-TALK)

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: How much training to
7 you guys do for EMS...

8 CHIEF WERNER: Okay, so, everybody who comes to
9 Emergency Medical Dispatch is trained as a call taker
10 first, which is ten weeks. And, then some people
11 move on to become a radio dispatcher, that is an
12 additional ten weeks of training.

13 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay, and do you believe that
14 is sufficient training?

15 CHIEF WERNER: Excuse me?

16 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Is that sufficient training
17 in your expertise?

18 CHIEF WERNER: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay. And, how long... How
20 often are dispatchers working overtime?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I would have to get
22 back to you on the Fire Alarm Dispatch side. Yes, I
23 don't have that with me, Chair, but I have no problem
24 getting that to you today.

2 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay, great, that would be
3 great.

4 And, just my last question before I yield to
5 Council Member Paladino.

6 Do you believe that Dispatch should be borough
7 based? And, if so, how do you believe this will
8 better serve the public?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Dispatch for Fire
10 and EMS is borough based.

11 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: It is borough based? Okay,
12 thank you.

13 I yield to Council Member Paladino. And, I note
14 that Council Member Lynn Schulman has joined us.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Good morning, and thank
16 you very much for this very educational, though, I
17 don't understand much about technology, the hearing
18 this morning.

19 I am interested, uh, Council Member Ariola did
20 talk about the number of dispatchers you have on --
21 total 35 and five supervisors?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Correct, and two
23 chief dispatchers per tour.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Okay, my question lies
25 with this: If, God forbid, there is another terrorist

1 attack on this city, and we are fully relying upon
2 technology to get us through, what kind of backups do
3 you have... Or do you have any -- it is set up, God
4 forbid, the, uh, an attach should happen like 9/11?
5

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, I will speak
7 from an FDNY 9-1-1 perspective, and then if OTI wants
8 to double down they can.

9 So, the 9-1-1 system as a whole, we have two
10 PSACS, two call centers... (CROSS-TALK)

11 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Mm-hmm

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: one in Brooklyn and
13 one the Bronx. They are mirror images of one
14 another. And, if one were to shut down today, the
15 other can dispatch all five boroughs for police,
16 fire, and EMS without a hiccup.

17 If you are talking about the applications
18 themselves because there are so many systems and
19 subsystems that use, CAD being one of them, the new
20 FireCAD is very resilient. The best way I could
21 describe it is there is a primary CAD that is running
22 right now, right?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Right.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And it is flanked by
25 two identical systems that are keeping pace with it

1 in real time. Okay? And, so if that main system
2 were to fail completely...

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Right.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And, let us say it
6 was due to... (CROSS-TALK)

7 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Attack... (CROSS-TALK)

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: act of terror or
9 something that happened, for example in downtown
10 Brooklyn...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Correct.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: The system would
13 seamlessly fail over with...(CROSS-TALK)

14 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: [INAUDIBLE]

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Seamless. When I say
16 seamless, it is active as active, it's... (CROSS-
17 TALK)

18 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Because, I think that is
19 how... (CROSS-TALK)

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: without the user even
21 knowing that it happened...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Mm-hmm

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: It would fail over to
24 technology in the Bronx.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Got it.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: without... (CROSS-
3 TALK)

4 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Seamlessly.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Correct.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Beautiful.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: And, then now if
8 that... Now we are on that one... That second leg.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Mm-hmm

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: If that was to for
11 some reason have a technical issue, and that was to
12 go down, we would then fail over to our third leg
13 that is keeping pace and is real time. It is why we
14 have such high availability on this applicant. It is
15 99.99% up per [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-TALK)

16 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: And, that is why you are
17 the best in the world.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Thank you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: There you go. Thank you
20 very much. You have put a lot of minds at ease, thank
21 you. [TIMER CHIMES]

22 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: [INAUDIBLE] questions?
23 Okay. Thank you so much Council Member Paladino.

24 So, I have a couple of more, I think, questions
25 for FDNY before getting to OTI.

1 So, my... This one might be a little bit geared
2 towards both. On November 29th at a Gov Tech
3 conference, FDNY's Deputy Chief Information Officer,
4 Kamal Deol, I hope I am saying that right.
5

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Kamal Deol

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, mentioned that the
8 FDNY would need more data from other agencies such a
9 traffic data from DOT, data from Department of
10 Sanitation, and NYCHA. Could you please share if
11 FireCAD has this data sharing capability, and if not,
12 how do you see data sharing being implemented?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, so I cannot
14 really speak to the context of Kamal Deol's...

15 (CROSS-TALK)

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I would say she was
18 likely engaging in ideation around, like, what are
19 some... What is possible? Right? People always
20 want to know what is possible with IT.

21 Yeah, can... FireCAD is state of the art.
22 Right? It is contemporary technology. And so, in
23 terms of... I had mentioned earlier that it is
24 compatible with Next-Generation 9-1-1, which is an IP
25 based... (CROSS-TALK)

2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: standard. And, so,
4 because it is built that way, it will be able to
5 ingest large amounts of data if we design and build a
6 function for it. Right? And, so, I am not really
7 sure on where she... you know, on what exactly she
8 was speaking to, but I can tell you that FireCAD is
9 certainly built to ingest data.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: You are not sure if it
11 is... To share data across agencies? You are not
12 sure if it is compatible...

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: It... No, I am
14 saying it... Is it compatible... (CROSS-TALK)

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: It is?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: You just do not know if it
18 is... (CROSS-TALK)

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: We are not...
20 Right... Right now... (CROSS-TALK)

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: The only data share
23 that is happening are the, uh, the sharing that
24 happens with the public safety agencies. So, between
25

1 Fire Department, between the Police Department, and
2 our Public Safety partners at OTI.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it. And, so you
5 believe that there is value in sharing data across
6 some of the agencies such as NYCHA, DOT, and DSNY,
7 [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-TALK)

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: The Fire Department
9 believes there is always value in sharing data. Uh...
10 (CROSS-TALK)

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Sure, so there is no real
12 because, you are not doing it, you are not sure why
13 you are not? But, it is something... (CROSS-TALK)

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: We don't...
15 There... There is no operational plan for that right
16 now. But, if there, uhm, if there is an operational
17 plan put forward... (CROSS-TALK)

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: the Fire Department
20 would certainly engage.

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah.

22 And, you mentioned, uhm, that FireCAD is
23 compatible with Next-Gen?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes... (CROSS-TALK)

25 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Uh, which is great.

2 So, does this mean that the picture of video that
3 a 9-1-1 caller sends to 9-1-1 would be available to
4 FDNY through FireCAD?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: It would not be
6 today, because we haven't built something to... We
7 have not built something to bring it in. Is it
8 capable? Yes. But, it is not a function that exists
9 today. So, there would be no reason to build it.

10 That being said, Next-Generation 9-1-1, we will
11 have the ability. The 9-1-1 call centers will have
12 the ability to not only bring... You know, take
13 calls, but they will also be able to take images;
14 they will be able to stream video ,you know, all
15 types of wide bandwidth for data. When that happens,
16 yes, we will develop functionality, if there is a
17 business need for it to be brought into FireCAD.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you.

19 I had a question about the... What, uhm, do
20 you... Are you aware what the ISPs' that you use for
21 FireCAD or that your dispatchers are using in their
22 centers... internet service provider?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Uh, for what part
24 of, uhm... We are not dispatching on the internet.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Your... Your system for
3 FireCAD, uh, what is the... What internet do you use
4 to utilize this system?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, our systems are
6 on the Public Safety Network, which is managed by
7 OTI.

8 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, so you are not
9 sure... It is.. You are not sure who the provider
10 is?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: It...

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Who the ISP is?

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: OTI is... (CROSS-TALK)

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah, thank you. Okay.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Thank you for the
16 question.

17 These applications and systems sit on something
18 called the Public Safety Network. The network
19 connects the Public Safety facilities together. It
20 is a closed environment. It does not go out to the
21 internet. So, it sits on private networks that are
22 managed by OTI.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it. Okay. Thank you.

24 I am curious, uhm, my last question for FDNY,
25 fire department funding algorithms? Is that correct?

1 Analyze existing data related to fire occurrences,
2 response times, and other variables to inform
3 decisions on funding allocation and closures of
4 neighborhood fire departments within a given
5 jurisdiction. Could you please tell us about how
6 this algorithm works? And, how it works (sic)?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Is, I am not familiar
9 with that algorithm for... (CROSS-TALK)

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: that application.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: We can go... (CROSS-
14 TALK)

15 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yeah.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: If you could just
17 maybe send me that. That was kind of a long time...

18 (CROSS-TALK)

19 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Absolutely... (CROSS-
20 TALK)

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: If you could just
22 send that to me and we will look into it.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Uhm...

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I have no awareness
25 of that algorithm.

1 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, uh, it is just...
2
3 It is just important for us.

4 Uh, The Fire Risk Assessment System developed by
5 Oracle, uses data mining to predict which buildings
6 are at the highest risk for catching fire, could you
7 tell us more about this system, and how, and if it is
8 integrated into FireCAD? Are you familiar with
9 that... The Fire Risk Assessment System?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, I am familiar
11 with it, it is not what, uh, within my purview, nor
12 is it integrated with FireCAD. The risk-based...
13 (CROSS-TALK)

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay...

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: algorithm that you
16 are referencing and, uhm, this is from my limited
17 knowledge of it, that is for inspectional services,
18 not for emergency dispatch. And, so that is... It
19 is a... My understanding is that is a guiding, uhm,
20 application so that field units have a better
21 indication of what parts of their neighborhoods they
22 should be inspecting based on risk.

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And, uhm, this is just
24 more of a general question, is there any data that is
25 available to fire fighters, uhm, or EMT workers

1 through FireCAD system? Is there something that they
2 can retrieve besides, I guess, like, the address of
3 the situation? But is there other data that is
4 available to them?
5

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, there is a lot
7 of information that gets pushed to each unit when
8 ,you know, when they are responding. And, so, if we
9 are talking about on the fire side, you are not just
10 getting an address, but you are getting a rundown on
11 all of the different resources that are also assigned
12 with you... (CROSS-TALK)

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: to that incident.
15 You are getting particulars on the incident. And
16 most importantly, you are getting what we call CIDS
17 (sp?), it is critical information, on that building
18 address. And, so that data is pushed through FireCAD
19 and then it appears on monitors within the apparatus
20 up in the cab and also in the crew cab. And, so our
21 workforce is -- in terms of situational awareness --
22 they are being given critical information enroute on
23 their way into those particular addresses.

24

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And what are... What are
3 some examples of the resources you mentioned? And, I
4 do not know if I heard that correctly.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, other recourses
6 coming in. So, if... (CROSS-TALK)

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Oh...

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: for instance, if
9 there was a call for smoke in an apartment, uh, in
10 the next building across the street, if I am in an
11 engine company responding, I am going to want to know
12 who else is coming in on this incident with me so
13 that I know well in advance who I will be working
14 with. And, so, as part of that, uhm, initial drop of
15 information that comes in, I will see all of the
16 engine companies. I will see all of the ladder
17 companies. I will see which chiefs. I will see what
18 special units all are assigned to that particular
19 incident. And that is what I mean by recourses.

20 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it.

21 I want to just talk briefly about the cyber
22 security of a system like this. Who manages FDNY's
23 cyber security?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: We are... Our CSOS
25 (sp?) manages cyber security for the agency.

2 However, in terms of the public safety side with our
3 dispatch systems, we work very closely with Cyber
4 Command OTI to meet their standards.

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And, are you aware of any
6 backup protocols in place for, uhm, for cyber
7 security if there are any alternatives or any backup
8 protocols?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I cannot speak to
10 backup protocols for cyber. But, if there is a
11 specific area that you want me to look into I can. I
12 don't know if you have anything you want to add?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: What area are we
14 talking about exactly? I am not clear on the
15 question... (CROSS-TALK)

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: So, I am just in general,
17 I am concern... Well, not concerned, but my question
18 is about cyber security, in the event of the worst
19 ,you know, catastrophe, if you are aware, or if you
20 can make us aware of what is a backup protocol in
21 this instance where our cyber security is
22 compromised?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: If there were a
24 cyber-attack... (CROSS-TALK)

25 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: against 9-1-1?

3 Uh... (CROSS-TALK)

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: For FDNY.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So, well, from a
6 public safety perspective, there are a number of
7 backup plan, and redundancies, and emergency plans
8 that are excised... (CROSS-TALK)

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm?

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: in case of an event
11 of that nature.

12 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it.

13 And, then, my next questions are for you, and you
14 are, Mr. Barbera, is that correct? Okay... At OTI.

15 Uhm, so, the, uhm, the Deputy Commissioner
16 mentioned, obviously Next-Generation, is an exciting
17 new tool. We are not... We do not have everything
18 we need yet. But, do you have a sense from OTI, uhm,
19 when is... When can we expect completion of Next-
20 Generation?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: So, Next-Generation
22 is currently in progress. It started in June of
23 2020. And, the expected completion date is by the
24 end of 2024.

25 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: By the end of 2024?

1 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA:: Yes, it is
2 currently in the build phase.

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: In the?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Build phase...

5 (CROSS-TALK)

6 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Build phase? Okay.

7 Uh, so, I... In our hearing in August, OTI
8 mentioned that LinkNYC Auditing Report was internally
9 circulated for review and final approval and that it
10 would be immediately shared with us. During another
11 meeting with OTI, we were told that the report would
12 be emailed to us in December. And we just... We
13 have not gotten have it. Do you have a sense of
14 LinkNYC Auditing Report and when we can expect it?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: I could not comment
16 for anything for LinkNYC. I am responsible for the
17 public safety and emergency management side of OTI.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it.

19 And, then, my last question for you is, we had a
20 hearing in August, Commissioner Fraser (sp?)
21 testified, and I will... He basic... He testified
22 saying that, uh, OTI had done a survey of every
23 agency on technology programs that have... running
24 of significant size and scale so that OTI can then
25

1
2 begin to do an assessment to see which areas can be
3 consolidated, save costs, etc. Do you have a sense of
4 what FDNY's response to that survey was?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BARBERA: Again, I would not
6 be able to comment on that. I would have to defer
7 that to the CTO's office, because that was a citywide
8 initiative, and it was not directly related To Public
9 Safety and Emergency Management.

10 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay.

11 That's it for me. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I just want to go back to the
13 budgeted amounts.

14 So, you... It was 207 you said for... Right
15 for...

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, for fire alarm
17 dispatch, it is a budgeted headcount of 207...

18 (CROSS-TALK)

19 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: 207 and there is...

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: That is including
21 dispatchers and supervisors... (CROSS-TALK)

22 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Right, so the...

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: and, I said that we
24 were at 197... (CROSS-TALK)

1 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Right, so the supervisors and
2 the chiefs, they are not actually doing the
3 dispatching? Right? Is it just... or are they?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: They are... Are...
5 Well, they are not doing the dispatching. The
6 supervisors... To your last question that you had
7 asked, Chair, was regarding borough based
8 [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-TALK)

9 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah, yeah, no, but I am
10 just...

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: No, but... But...
12 (CROSS-TALK)

13 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I want to expound on it.
14 So... (CROSS-TALK)

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Right, so what I am
16 saying is that each borough has a group of
17 dispatchers, and then the supervisor that is actually
18 positioned directly behind and above them with, uh,
19 technology array that tracks everything that they are
20 doing. And, in the even that...

21 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Mm-hmm

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: another... a
23 dispatcher is having either an issue or there is a
24

1 high call volume, they can actually dispatch from
2 their positions as well... (CROSS-TALK)

3
4 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: They can? Right, but that is
5 not their regular... (CROSS-TALK)

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Right, I just
7 wanted... (CROSS-TALK)

8 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-TALK)

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: you to be... To be
10 clear that they have the ability... (CROSS-TALK)

11 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Right.

12 And, then, for the 197, the number you gave me,
13 the 197, I know that there is a class in today,
14 actually that... (CROSS-TALK)

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: We have... (CROSS-
16 TALK)

17 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: started... (CROSS-TALK)

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, we have a...
19 (CROSS-TALK)

20 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: with [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-
21 TALK)

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: a class of twelve.

23 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Right, so does that 197
24 include the fifteen that started today?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes, Chair.

2

3 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: In class?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay.

6 And, then, just to get back to the overtime, I
7 know you said they work was it two, uh, two twelves?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: They work two 12's,
9 yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Two twelves. And, with the
11 overtime, can... What is the max that they can work?
12 Is it 14... 12... 14 hours? Eighteen hours?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: So, I am... I am
14 not familiar with their labor agreement. So, I... I
15 am going to take this down and get this to you today.

16 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Mm-hmm.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: You had asked earlier
18 about... (CROSS-TALK)

19 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Right...

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: the hours, and then I
21 will also get that to you.

22 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Perfect, alright, thank you,
23 that is all I have.

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I just have, uh, one
25 question for clarity. Uhm, so, just back to the data

1 that is available to fire fighters through FireCAD,
2 you mentioned... I just want to confirm that I heard
3 this correctly, the acoustics in here... Uhm, do
4 they have maps of the buildings that they are going
5 to? That is available through them? Or, the
6 building the composition, is that... Did you say
7 that?
8

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: No, ma'am.

10 So, they have what we call our CIDS, C I D S, it
11 is Critical Information, and so that... That...

12 (CROSS-TALK)

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: that information is
15 entered into our system, uhm, from the field units.
16 So, when field units are out on, uh, inspection or if
17 they are just out in their areas, and they are
18 noticing particular hazards, or something gets, uh,
19 referred to us from DOB about a particular hazard,
20 the officers in those units will enter that
21 information, because it is critical to... (CROSS-
22 TALK)

23 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mm-hmm?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: to their work. They
25 will enter that information into our database. And,

1 so that when that particular address pops... In...
2
3 When the CAD system has that address entered into it,
4 uhm, that CIDS information is immediately available
5 to the fire fighters on that apparatus.

6 And, so, like, an example of that would be like a
7 warning about lightweight construction... (CROSS-
8 TALK)

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Mmmm!

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Right? For a
11 particular address. The lightweight construction is
12 great because it is... It is lightweight, it is less
13 expensive, but it not great under fire load. And, so
14 that is something that they would want to know.
15 Right? So, it limits their time say within an
16 occupancy.

17 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it.

18 So, they have... Outside of, uh, that instance,
19 they do not have access to... to... the maps, or
20 like, of a particular area, I guess, before arriving?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: It... They do not
22 because if... That does not exist. I am assuming
23 you are... Like, floorplans from an address?

24 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: I'm sorry?
25

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I... Are you
3 talking about, like, floor plans... (CROSS-TALK)

4 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Sure, Mm-hmm.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: for a particular
6 address?

7 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Yes.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: If they existed, then
9 I would say, yes. FireCAD has... It is absolutely
10 capable of ingesting it... (CROSS-TALK)

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay. But, it
12 [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-TALK)

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: but, that doesn't...

14 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: it is not something that
15 they have access to now at this point? They just...
16 Not... (CROSS-TALK)

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Not yet.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Reliable... Okay.

19 Uh, okay, and them, I think my last question is
20 just related... This is more general, so if you
21 cannot answer, that is fine.

22 Uh, it is related to sensors and measuring
23 temperature, so, many sensors, including sensors
24 measuring temperature are installed throughout the
25 City, that... Can you say that that is accurate?

1 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I couldn't say that
2 with any certainty. I.... (CROSS-TALK)

3 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And, it... So, I know for
4 a fact that they are in the LinkNYC [INAUDIBLE]
5 because they have testified to that at hearings.

6 But, so my question to you is do you know if FDNY
7 uses or has access or data from these sensors, uhm,
8 in any capacity?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: We do not use that
10 data, no.

11 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Okay, you don't even know
12 it... they exist at this point (LAUGHING)...

13 (CROSS-TALK)

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: I do [INAUDIBLE]...

15 (CROSS-TALK)

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Is this something that
17 could be useful?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Uhm, unless you can
19 strap it to a firefighter, uh, probably not...

20 (CROSS-TALK)

21 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Unless we could what?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: If you could strap it
23 to a firefighter [NO AUDIO] [INAUDIBLE] I'm sorry, a
24 firefighter where I could track biometrics, uhm, that
25

1 would be interesting and probably helpful. But, uh,
2 in terms of environment... I cannot think of a use
3 case, that does not mean that one does not exist.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Got it.

6 Okay, thank you so much. Thank you, Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay, thank you so much for
8 your testimony. It is greatly appreciated.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER AUGIER: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Uhm, now, we will hand it
11 over to Will Hongach.

12 WILLIAM HONGACH: [INAUDIBLE]

13 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Oh, I am so sorry.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sure, thank you, Chair, and
15 thank you, everyone for your testimony.

16 Now, we are going to turn to public testimony.
17 And our first witness is Richard Allman.

18 And, just for the record, we ask you to limit
19 your testimony to two minutes, thank you. Mr. Allman,
20 you may begin when ready.

21 RICHARD ALLMAN: Thank you very much, Chair
22 Ariola, committee members, Fire Department
23 leadership.

24 I am Richard Allman, my role is Site Director of
25 the A. Philip Randolph Senior Center, which is in

1
2 Upper Manhattan, which is part of a group of three
3 senior centers in upper Manhattan. They are well-run
4 senior centers with a track record of quality
5 services in full compliance with law and regulation.

6 What brings me here today is issues that have
7 come up in seeking Fire Department Certifications Of
8 Fitness for supervision of the sprinkler system and
9 the alarm system. Within our work, these are
10 naturally the task of our custodian who is a well-
11 qualified and high performing employee and who was
12 prepared to register and study for the relevant Fire
13 Department exam. It is consistent with his work, but
14 he was unable to take the test. The issue is
15 language as he his most fluent in Spanish. He does
16 his work well; he interacts well and responsively
17 with clientele and staff.

18 The written test itself and the study materials
19 are the issue as they make him unable to register,
20 study, and perform for the certifications. We do not
21 want it to be the work of a caseworker, program
22 coordinator, cook, or other employee to substitute
23 for the work that he is supposed to do, because that
24 would take away from the services that they are
25 supposed to deliver. That is, as I understand, a

1 discrimination. And it appears to me to be
2 inconsistent with both Fire Department and New York
3 City policy.
4

5 I ask simply that either administratively or
6 legislatively, that this issue [TIMER CHIMES] be
7 addressed. We want to be in full compliance with what
8 is certainly reasonable and important -- regulations
9 -- but it should not be at the expense of services to
10 seniors. Thank you very much.

11 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you for your testimony.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, again.

13 And our next panelist, or I should say witness,
14 will be via Zoom, and the panelist is Miss Smyth from
15 the Uniformed Fire Alarm Dispatchers Association.

16 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: And, I just want to make
17 mention that we have been joined by Council Member
18 Won, thank you.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

20 (NO RESPONSE)

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: (MICROPHONE ON MUTE)

22 [INAUDIBLE]

23 UNKNOWN: Okay, I think you were trying to call
24 Smyth, and I was unmuted. You have the wrong person.
25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, we will get back to the
3 witness, to Miss Smyth. And, we will start with
4 another witness, uh, and I want to announce a
5 representative from Local 2507, Oren Barzilay.

6 OREN BARZILAY: Good morning, Committee Chair, and
7 honorable members of the Council.

8 I am Oren Barzilay, President of FDNY EMS Local
9 2507.

10 On behalf of the more than 4,000 members of the
11 FDNY I am honored to speak for, I am here to testify
12 today regarding The Fire Department's emergency
13 dispatch system -- especially concerning the uptick
14 call volume coupled with frequent shutdowns and
15 delays in the system.

16 In recent months, the FDNY has been taking longer
17 to respond to medical emergencies. From The Mayor's
18 management report, the average response time for
19 emergency crews was nine minutes and 30 seconds in
20 2022 -- forty-six seconds longer than the average
21 from 2021.

22 As anyone in this room knows, our profession is
23 reliant on being timely and reacting quickly.
24 However, delays in the 9-1-1 system can make a dire
25 situation even worse. If a patient is in rapid need

of an ambulance, a response time of nine minutes is not going to cut it.

Clinical death begins after four minutes; biological death begins after six minutes. This past October, we had a citywide 9-1-1 system shutdown for hours as a result of an outside contractor pressing the glass-enclosed emergency power button -- something that no one without authorization should so easily be able to access. In just this one instance, our radio system went down for roughly... From 11:00 A. M. to 2:30 P. M., and our mobile terminals were not functional until 6:00 P. M. -- that is seven hours of massive disruption. We were forced to use pen, paper, and telephones to gather information and then dispatch our medical first responders were they needed to go [TIMER CHIMES] to reach patients. It meant call information... (CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired...

OREN BARZILAY: was written down on index cards and then walked over to the dispatcher, who then sent that information to the units.

In this modern era, everything is intended to be done digitally in seconds, because life on the line, there is no time to waste. The results were precious

1
2 seconds and minutes were lost from the old-fashioned
3 delivery of the 9-1-1 information to the dispatcher,
4 and then from the dispatcher to the unit.

5 Every minute that goes by has an adverse effect
6 on the patient's health and survival. And critical
7 errors are possible when things have to be written
8 down. The validity of calls could not also be
9 verified through our caller I.D. system and can cause
10 a loss of information regarding the emergency address
11 and precision location of a caller. Sometimes it
12 results in sending units to the wrong location.

13 FDNY EMS workers take pride in their work, but
14 this shutdown caused immense anxiety. Furthermore,
15 our dispatchers were forced to guess the approximate
16 location of where our ambulances were, because that
17 error also shut down our [INAUDIBLE] GPS system.

18 This was not a glitch of the FDNY side, but an
19 outside force -- an unauthorized contractor with no
20 supervision, who made a boneheaded decision that cut
21 the 9-1-1 system to a city, leaving everyone to
22 scramble so that lives would not be lost.

23 With New York City 9-1-1 call volumes regularly
24 increasing, we can never allow something like this to
25 happen again. Our units had no line of communication

1
2 with our dispatchers and the radios were down in some
3 areas. In some sections of the City, when our
4 dispatchers were trying to reach our units, there was
5 no radio to communicate with them. They had to use
6 telephones. Information was written down and lost.
7 Police and fire engines were asking for help or ETA's
8 on ambulances, and when there was no answer, they
9 were transported by either a fire engine or a police
10 car.

11 Staffing is atrocious at the EMS Dispatch Center.
12 We are so short staffed that callers do not be
13 accessible to our operators. We process 200 to 300
14 calls an hour with only 40 to 50 people on the phones
15 at each hour.

16 I appreciate the time to testify today, and I
17 will take any questions that you have.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Thank you so much for your
19 honest testimony, for your perspective, for your
20 advocacy. So, I was just speaking with Chair Ariola,
21 and obviously, I think what you have to share on
22 behalf of your membership sounds differently than
23 what the FDNY reported today. So, I am very curious,
24 uh, if I can, I don't how much time you have, but
25 they confirmed that the old system, StarFire, used to

1 crash often. They could not tell me how much. But
2 could you share kind of what... Does FireCAD feel
3 like it is the system that dispatchers, and that your
4 membership needs, to do their job appropriately when
5 obviously there are multiple reported crashes -- they
6 cannot tell us how many times StarFire crashed
7 annually, but kind of what does that juxtaposition
8 feel like for you and your membership? Obviously, I
9 feel like you all want to rely on a system, but they
10 were trying to... to make it sound like ,you know,
11 these are inevitable crashed that happened, where
12 what we are trying to do is get to a point where
13 there are zero crashes.
14

15 So, can you kind of tell us what the difference
16 has felt like for your membership?

17 OREN BARZILAY: Yes, so, I don't have the data on
18 the StarFire, as I represent the EMSCAD operators on
19 the EMS side. But, when our system crashes, uh,
20 imagine when you are in an ambulance and now you have
21 to scramble for a pen and paper to write down the
22 address that is going to be read over a frequency.
23 You don't get the entire information on the patient
24 or the police precinct, uh, or the cross streets that
25 are readily available. Every ambulance has a

1 computer in it. And, there is much more detailed
2 information that comes in it. The system crashes
3 frequently. Sometimes it is a couple of minutes, and
4 sometimes it is hours. And, when that happens,
5 precious minutes, seconds, are lost. You know? And,
6 then, when the system comes back up online, all of
7 the calls are re-entered into the system, so we are
8 sending ambulances to the same location hours later
9 searching for patients that were either already moved
10 or the patient did not wait for us. But, this does
11 happen occasionally. And, it is very burdensome to
12 write down this information. You know, sometimes
13 people make mistakes on what they write down or what
14 the police give us -- it is different than what the
15 caller was supposed to give us. It is horrific when
16 you have a system crash.

18 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Absolutely, thank you so
19 much. Uh, Council Member Paladino?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Uh, good morning. Wow,
21 your testimony is very different than what I just
22 heard.

23 I want to double back on the same exact question
24 that I asked the FDNY who were here. And, uh, that
25 is, are you equipped to handle a terrorists attack?

1 By your testimony just before, it does not sound
2
3 as if you are. It goes into pen and pencil mode,
4 which is prehistoric.

5 So, if you could just give me a little background
6 on that, I sure would appreciate it, thank you.

7 OREN BARZILAY: I feel that our PSAC II Center in
8 the Bronx is a safe area. There is no access by cars
9 in the surrounding area as it is separated from the
10 public. However, our Brooklyn building is located
11 at a main intersection where a car could just pull up
12 to it and a disaster may take place. Yes, there are
13 barriers outside, there are police outside, but when
14 a truck can pull up on Flatbush Avenue and park it
15 right outside our window, that's it, it's over. It
16 is not a safe building for us to be in.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Then, let me elaborate,
18 if an attack similar to 9-1-1 was to happen, for
19 example, a plane flying into buildings, are we
20 equipped to handle this in its current state?

21 OREN BARZILAY: Again, our people are able to
22 handle it. But, if you are referring to safety, I
23 think our location in the Bronx is safe. However,
24 the location in Brooklyn, it is... A taxi, uh, a
25 person with a bookbag can drive outside the building

1 and just put a bomb outside of it. I don't think
2 that building is in a safe area.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: As far as you guys being
5 able to do your jobs as EMS dispatchers and workers,
6 are people going to be able to cooperate with you if
7 something happens in... Uh, communicate with you, if
8 something happens in downtown New York or in the
9 borough of Queens? Or, are we going to be left with
10 a shutdown -- a major technological shutdown?

11 OREN BARZILAY: So, uh, if something were to
12 happen, everything will... is capable of being
13 transferred over to the Bronx.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: So, what... we would be
15 relying on the Bronx facility if we have a tragedy of
16 ,you know, the magnitude that we had on 9/11?

17 OREN BARZILAY: That is correct.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: And, they would be able
19 to handle it?

20 OREN BARZILAY: Uh, well, the staffing will be a
21 little short for the first, uh, few hours, I would
22 say, until everybody is relocated to the Bronx. But,
23 eventually, they will be able to handle the
24 situation.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: I don't like to be a
3 doomsday machine, but we have to deal with reality,
4 and reality is what... the world that we are living
5 in today, we need to be prepared for what might
6 possibly be coming down the pike. If we could... If
7 we cannot handle this city as it exist right now, and
8 things shut down and you are left to pen and paper
9 and things like that, I just wonder about if, God
10 forbid, the most dreaded thing should happen to us
11 once again. So...

12 OREN BARZILAY: I understand.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER PALADINO: Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Oren, it's Joann Ariola, I
15 just wanted to go back to the overtime and the amount
16 of hours that the dispatchers are working.

17 From your point of view, with your members, ,you
18 know, what is the staffing like? How many hours are
19 they working? And, how many hours of -- including
20 their overtime -- are they working? Because there
21 was a discrepancy.

22 OREN BARZILAY: There is a ton of overtime in our
23 dispatch centers. You know, we are... We are still
24 impacted by COVID. You know, we have an 11 percent,
25 as of this week, 11 percent of our members our out

1 sick on a daily basis -- 77 percent of it, is work
2 related. Our members are still coming down with
3 COVID. We are not immune to it. And from other
4 injuries that may occur doing the work. So, overtime
5 is high. We don't have enough people to take 9-1-1
6 calls on a daily basis. There is what is called a
7 relay position, and that is between the... That is
8 on the EMS side. When there is no EMS operator to
9 take your call, they send that information to person
10 who will just enter the address and the location,
11 from whatever the police send them, and that
12 individual will not get first aid instructions over
13 the phone. We will just send somebody to assist
14 them. So, the staffing is problematic ,you know, it
15 is... The call volumes, they are days... We had
16 days last week where it reached almost 6,000. And we
17 still have... We only have 30 - 40 people on the
18 phone at a time. For a city as busy as ours, it
19 is... It is just unacceptable. You know, our
20 members suffer PTSD from taking calls back, to back,
21 to back. It is never ending. The calls just keep
22 coming in, and there is no manpower.

24 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you so much.

25 Any other questions?

2 Thank you so much for your testimony, Mr.
3 Barzilay.

4 OREN BARZILAY: Yes.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I want to thank again,
6 everyone, for their testimony. And our next witness
7 is Bobby Eustace.

8 BOBBY EUSTACE: Thank you, how are you?

9 I just want to take the opportunity... Uh, thank
10 you, I am Bobby Eustace, the Vice President of New
11 York City Firefighters Association.

12 I feel like I should help you guys clarify on a
13 couple of things that I have heard here. A lot of
14 different things as far as the dispatcher, uh, some
15 of the things they said, and also I want to touch on
16 a couple of different problems, too.

17 Uh, they said they have an IT guy, I don't know
18 if there is a difference between the IT to take
19 advantage of the technology, that I am glad to you
20 are here... Uh, I don't know if there is an IT
21 person, like, someone who is going to help you with
22 your mouse, or if someone is going to help you as far
23 as moving software forward. There used to be a UCT
24 system that they got rid of in New York City, because
25 it was just a disaster. But, still, they testified

1 today that the 9-1-1 call comes into the cops, and
2 the police get it, and then it has to go to EMS.
3
4 And, then sometimes it has to go to the fire
5 department. So, that has been a problem for a long
6 time. So, for the firefighters, I am going to read a
7 ticket to you that happened on December... Here we
8 go... October 15th. Engine 314 got a ticket for an
9 alarm for a cardiac arrest -- possibly dead. So,
10 they showed up on this scene... When they got on the
11 scene, the woman directed them to come inside of the
12 house for word of an unconscious victim. They came
13 in, there was a gentleman on top of the staircase.
14 They said, "Where is the unconscious victim?" and,
15 they said, "It's right over here." I said, "When is
16 the last time you saw them?" and, they said, "Well,
17 two minutes ago, because I shot him." And, then,
18 there was the gun on the table.

19 So, when they get the rundown from the cops, and
20 you can see that later, both the police department
21 and the EMS were told nine minutes earlier not to
22 show up on the scene. So, none of this information
23 gets transferred to the fire department. This has
24 been a problem before. Now, they did testify that
25

1 the EMS system is going to get upgraded, and it is 45
2 years old, that's phenomenal.
3

4 He also talked about the critical information,
5 CIDS, it is super important that we get that in the
6 fire department. There is a refresh button you can
7 hit, so if my units are out at another run, and we
8 become available, and they send another unit, we can
9 hit refresh, and it puts it back into play. And the
10 fire department [TIMER CHIMES] system is phenomenal.
11 It is very good. And it is one of the best in the
12 world. And it will update you that.

13 But, when it comes to EMS runs, there is no
14 update. And there is no information right there.

15 Even our radios are not on the same system. You
16 have to go to channel 15 to translate with them, to
17 actually have a communication system with them.

18 You know this started back after 9/11 where we
19 started having OEM to try to have intercommunications
20 with them. It has just never really been a full
21 merger.

22 And even with dispatching now, it is not a full
23 merger.

24 So, like, when you watch 9-1-1 shows, where there
25 is, like, one dispatcher still in New York City --

1 no. Fire. P. D. EMS. Very different. Very
2 separate. Like, even they said, they do not train
3 together. Completely different.
4

5 So, there is a gap. Even the way the engines get
6 dispatched when you get a call from EMS, if there is
7 a certain amount of time that goes by, that is what
8 generates an engine's response to get sent there.

9 So, now, as you can imagine if there a
10 catastrophe like we are talking about today, the
11 delays get even greater and greater.

12 So, to answer your question, uh, if there is a
13 fire, and it is on the fire side, we are probably
14 prepared for it, because it is layered. EMS not so
15 much. They are probable not so much. Because that
16 system is just is not in play.

17 They also touched on something about what
18 system... You asked about how they answered their
19 questions. They did have to change that, because if
20 you just start asking someone a questions, they are
21 going to say yes. That is why they changed that
22 system. Because if you say... If you call 9-1-1,
23 and you said, "Are you hurt?" "Yes." "Are you not
24 breathing?" "Yes." You are just going to keep
25 saying, "Yes", and then you misdiagnose someone, and

1 then you get the wrong responses. And that is what
2 also generates and engine company response, is that
3 the segments... It is something that is called One
4 to Seven, uh, one through three is what is supposed
5 to respond to an engine company, so, if you just keep
6 saying, "Do you have a heart condition?", "Yes, yes,
7 yes, yes," you will generate a response. And then
8 what happens is, there are too many responses in New
9 York City as it is, and then you get too many people
10 out there, and you get the wrong responses. So, they
11 tried to eliminate that, too.

12 So, these are just a few of the problems right
13 there, so I hope I can answer any of your other
14 questions right there.

15 But, we have asked for this in Labor Management,
16 time and time and time again, to have solved this
17 dispatching problem. And, we are told there is no IT
18 guy to do this. It is similar to city time, there is
19 just no person to generate a new code or to fix this
20 or to solve this problem.

21 And we just keep being told that our dispatch
22 system is the greatest in the world. Yet, there is
23 no way to change this or have the EMS run refreshed.

24 So, it is a big issue for us.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Well, thank you so much
3 for being here, sitting here this whole time only to
4 have them leave, uh, as they always do.

5 And, so I raised that question, because obviously
6 you shared that there is no IT support. I did not
7 say IT guy on purpose... (CROSS-TALK)

8 BOBBY EUSTACE: IT support, I didn't mean to...

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: No, no, I understand. They
10 said it multiple times on record, and I am very
11 curious ,you know, we will do our due diligence and
12 follow up with them. But, obviously, there is a lot
13 of shortcomings that were not shared today. And, so
14 I think your testimony is super vital. And, I thank
15 you. Thank you for being here.

16 BOBBY EUSTACE: And, if they are going to move
17 forward with that EMS system, hopefully there is just
18 someone that they have added on or whatever. Just
19 hopefully there is some... improve in the future.
20 Because I think the IT in the City, we just need to
21 have the best moving forward. So, hopefully there is
22 someone there. So...

23 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And, Bobby, I just want to
24 thank you, because you are a part of the UFA as a
25 vice president, but you are also still a firefighter.

1
2 So, you see it from the point of view of someone who
3 is responding. So, thank you so much for your
4 testimony... (CROSS-TALK)

5 BOBBY EUSTACE: No, problem, and this still...
6 (CROSS-TALK)

7 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And, I... (CROSS-TALK)

8 BOBBY EUSTACE: goes on... I worked the other
9 night in the firehouse, and that still happens some
10 times where we will get a fever call front, and then
11 sometimes runs are generated between the two
12 agencies, where it will generate an engine's
13 response, and they will show up, and it won't be
14 related at all. It might just be to gain entry. And
15 that is just kind of a glitch in that system where
16 automatically there is a time that goes off to just
17 cutdown response times - - because response times are
18 such a critical issue -- where an engine company will
19 respond out, and it has nothing to do with that, and
20 that will just seem that way citywide... Where we
21 are getting a lot of fevered call [INAUDIBLE], well
22 that is not a segment that we should be responding
23 on. It is not ,you know, a cardiac arrest; it's not
24 difficulty breathing, they're not unconscious. And,

25

1 it just seems to be a glitch that happens in that
2 system a lot. Between [INAUDIBLE]... (CROSS-TALK)

3 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I appreciate your
4 testimony... I also want to make note that, Jason
5 Shelly (sp?) is still here from Fire Department. So,
6 he is absolutely taking copious notes, and he is
7 going to get back to us ,you know, with all of the
8 questions and answers... (CROSS-TALK)

9 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: Sorry, J. [INAUDIBLE]
10 here... (CROSS-TALK)

11 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah.

12 questions and answers... (CROSS-TALK)

13 CHAIRPERSON GUTIÉRREZ: J. Is here [INAUDIBLE]

14 BOBBY EUSTACE: Of course.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: I just want to say that
16 I worked at the Emergency Medical Service on the
17 Admin side in the late 80's - early 90's, and the
18 system has not changed since then. So, I want that
19 noted that we need to... We need to really do
20 something here, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you for your testimony.

22 BOBBY EUSTACE: Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you again for your
24 testimony.
25

2 And, I am going to call our next and final
3 witness, Miss Faye Smyth from Uniformed Fire Alarm
4 Dispatchers Association. Ms. Smyth, if you would
5 check your mic, because I have a message that you
6 have been unmuted.

7 FAYE SMYTH: (NO RESPONSE)

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I guess we are still having
9 technical difficulties to connect. We are just going
10 to wait for about a minute and see if we can resolve
11 the problem.

12 It looks like we are not able to connect to you,
13 Ms. Smyth, right now. Ms. Smyth, I want to say that
14 in the email that you received, do you have the email
15 address where you can submit your testimony? (CROSS-
16 TALK)

17 FAYE SMYTH: [BACKGROUND NOISE] Hello (HEAVY
18 MICROPHONE FEEDBACK)

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I am so sorry, it looks like
20 we just got connected...

21 FAYE SMYTH: Thank you so much.

22 Okay, I had to switch computers. I don't know
23 what happened. I apologize. Uh, just one second,
24 please. Let me just get myself situated because I
25

1 had to switch rooms. Alright, I do not have my notes
2 in front of me.
3

4 But, I was listening to all of the testimony.
5 The testimony that stated that the FireCAD system is
6 superior, in a lot of ways, yes, it is superior.
7 And, as you have heard from UFA just now, there are
8 glitches -- and serious glitches -- that we have come
9 upon recently with regards to that.

10 My original testimony was going to be on the
11 "Oops" button, but it looks like they are taking
12 steps to get that fixed. And they are taking steps
13 to make sure that it does not happen again.

14 But, when they say that FireCAD was online,
15 FireCAD was online, the data was saved, everything...
16 Uh, we used to have to go and retrieve big reels of
17 tapes that were being recorded in the office. And,
18 we do appreciate that we have moved away from that.

19 But, with regard to FireCAD being superior, it
20 is, but the glitches are still there.

21 Now, FireCAD data was available, and it was in
22 PSCA I at the time, and it did not relate to the
23 other parts of the system. So, FireCAD was working,
24 but the other parts of the system, we were still on
25 telephones; we had to rely on people calling us. The

1 backup radio, uhm, had to be used. It was not... It
2
3 is certainly not as good as the other radio. And,
4 this went on for hours. I mean, as to my protégé
5 there, uh, Oren Barzilay, had stated, it went on for
6 hours.

7 So, when JP talks about the FireCAD system, he is
8 100% correct when he says it is far superior to the
9 StarFire. But the glitch [BACKGROUND NOISE] with
10 regard to, uh, with the UFA is referring to, we
11 have... I have experienced it personally, and the
12 last line of the text is what you saw when you
13 dispatched. And, the last line said, "Arrest.
14 Possibly dead." And, then later, on, you look, and
15 in there it said, "I shot my brother." So, when they
16 showed up, they were there with a guy who had just
17 possibly killed his brother inside, and they were...

18 (CROSS-TALK)

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired...

20 (CROSS-TALK)

21 FAYE SMYTH: tending to him, not knowing that
22 there was a gun there. So, that is one of the
23 issues.

24 With regard to what Oren was stating about PSAC
25 I, yes, we should not be in that building. That

1 building is a... It is a commercial building. It is
2 made for business offices. It is certainly not made
3 to have emergency dispatch. Years ago, you know, the
4 thing that they tell you about, when you want to cut
5 off communications, the first thing you do in war is
6 to cut off communications. That is very easy to do
7 when you could pull a truck up to the side of the
8 building on Flatbush Avenue, even though you cannot
9 get in but, uh, instead of going around, you could
10 just be outside of it and do the damage. Unlike, the
11 new building in the Bronx, it is fortified because it
12 is by itself. And, we are always by ourselves. When
13 we were in the five offices, we were remote
14 [BACKGROUND NOISE] [INAUDIBLE] locations. I remember
15 after 9/11, I basically testified and said, you have
16 five fingers on a hand, we had a dispatch office in
17 every borough. And with that dispatch office, if
18 somebody lost power, one of the other four could pick
19 it up, or we go on citywide and pick it up. And, I
20 am saying that you can do that now, but when you have
21 five fingers on a hand, it is a lot, uhm, it is a lot
22 harder to knock out communications.
23

24 So, they closed our offices in the, uhm, they
25 wanted to improve the system, so they put us in to

1 these two... two buildings. And, it just does not
2 work with regard to systems going down.
3

4 And, to that regard, staffing was also mentioned.
5 And our staffing has been very short for so long
6 right now that... ever since COVID. Now, uh, JP had
7 said he does not know about our contracts, okay? He
8 doesn't know about our contracts, but our contract
9 states that we work two 12-hour days, two 12-hour
10 nights, we have specified days off. Since COVID ,
11 the City said they were in an emergency situation,
12 and my members have been ordered on 18-hour tours.

13 So, an 18-hour day, off for six hours, another
14 18-hour day, off for 12 hours. And, an 18-hour
15 night, off for six hours, and another 18-hour night
16 after being off for six hours. And, in addition to
17 that, being ordered in -- on their days off -- which
18 is against the contract. In our contract, it states
19 that we have specified days off. We have been
20 regularly ordered in on our days off because we are
21 so short staffed.

22 When I spoke to the Fire Department about it,
23 they said that we were in a State of Emergency, and
24 that is why we could not hire. And that is what the
25 City stated.

1 Well, I can tell you that EMS was hiring, and
2 they could not even keep up with it. P. D. was
3 hiring. And we were not being hired the first time
4 since... I joined the Fire Department in 1997,
5 previously, I was with the Police Department, as a
6 PCT, and in 1989 I joined them -- I have never seen
7 in the Fire Department where we were any part of an
8 emergency hiring freeze. We needed the people. We
9 have people doing 18-hour shifts, only off for six
10 hours. And, to speak to that, when you are in the
11 PSAC I, there is no place for you to rest your head.
12 You have to go home, or you have to sleep makeshift
13 under a desk that is not be -- you are really like a
14 cat -- you really cannot compare the two.

16 And when we were asked about it, and when I asked
17 about the facilities that Renee Campion at OLR had
18 told us we are going to be mirrored, uh, just like
19 PSAC II, well, when I spoke to management, they told
20 us that the facilities for us to rest our head were
21 cut out of the budget, because that wasn't considered
22 a priority.

23 So, you have people who are working night and
24 day, and having six hours off, maybe having an hour
25 commute to get home. So, you will get maybe four

1
2 hours sleep if you are lucky. And, that is what they
3 consider is okay for people to be answering emergency
4 calls in that condition.

5 So, when they talk about 207 people, I know we
6 are a small group, but we power the City. We power
7 the City for fire engines. We care about our units
8 in the field. We care about the public. And it is
9 just not, uhm, it has not been spoken about here, but
10 my people have been doing back-to-back tours like
11 this since the beginning of COVID. And the 207 count
12 that they are referring to, uhm, 28 of those, are not
13 even on what we call the working platform, which is
14 the people who take the calls, do the radio, do the
15 system.

16 We have a remote unit out in Brooklyn that goes
17 out to the scene, which is our fields communications
18 unit, and we have people who are working in
19 administratively. None of those positions are
20 allotted for with the budget from The Mayor's Office.
21 None of those are allotted for. So, that count is
22 kind of smoke and mirrors, because we have people off
23 the platform who are not... who are not working day
24 to day in what is supposed to be a fire dispatch
25 position.

1 And, I hope they get that changed. The 12
2
3 people who were included in the count as far as
4 people, uh, working, but they had their first day
5 today. So, I do not even understand how that can be
6 included.

7 So, I just wanted to put that light on it. And I
8 have been talking to the UFA with regards to this.
9 They did put some sort of paperwork out hoping to fix
10 the incidents where there is violence involved in an
11 EMS run that comes in that we do not see it. They
12 did say that they were going to fix it and that, uh,
13 if there is something violent going on at a scene,
14 that EMS would send an immediate message to our radio
15 dispatcher, and we would see that so we would get it
16 to the unit before they ever got to the scene. Well,
17 I can tell you that that did not happen. So, when you
18 hear the testimony, you have to ,you know... And, I
19 appreciate it.

20 And I'm sorry that I did not introduce myself, I
21 am Faye Smyth, I am the President of the Fire Alarm
22 Dispatcher Benevolent Association, and we are the,
23 uh, sole dispatchers in charge of sending out the
24 fire engines and the HazMat And we do not do EMS,
25 because we all speak different languages. And, we

1 learned that with UCT nine years on a pilot program
2 with Bloomberg and people died. And they realized
3 that you cannot do that in a city this size. And
4 that is something that I am glad that they changed it
5 back around.
6

7 But, with regard to the FireCAD system and the
8 "Oops" button, I am glad he fixed it. There is so
9 much more they need to do. They need to get us out
10 of this building because this building is really...
11 To speak to the council member's, uh, position about
12 terrorist, uh, first of all, my members should have
13 terrorist training just like everyone else. We
14 belong to the International Association of
15 Firefighters; they are willing to give us training.
16 It has to come through the FDNY by request. And, we
17 do need that training as well. But ,you know, I
18 just... I am sorry, I am speaking, uh, so fast, but
19 I am hoping that I am getting my point across. And,
20 technical issues, aside, thank you much.

21 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you, your point came
22 across and it has been well-taken. Thank you for
23 your testimony.

24 Seeing that there are no more people in our
25 public testimony, both in person and on Zoom, I would

2 like to thank all who have testified. I would also
3 like to thank The Committee on Fire Emergency
4 Management's Senior Legal Counsel, and The Committee
5 on Technology's, uh, Legislative Counsel, Joshua
6 Kingsley, and Irene Byhovsky respectively, as well as
7 William Hongach and Charles Kim, our Legislative
8 Policy Analysts -- and our wonderful Chiefs of Staff,
9 Anya and Phyliss (sp?) for helping to put this
10 together and making it a successful hearing.

11 Thank you very much. This is the end of The Fire
12 and Emergency Management Hearing.

13 [GAVELING OUT] [GAVEL SOUND]

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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 December 31, 2022