



March 7, 2019
Testimony of Daniel Nigro, Commissioner, FDNY
Preliminary Budget Hearing

Good morning Chair Borelli and all of the Council Members present. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the Preliminary Budget for Fiscal Year 2020 for the Fire Department. I am joined this morning by First Deputy Commissioner Laura Kavanagh, Chief of Department John Sudnik, Chief of EMS James Booth, and Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Finance Stephen Rush.

I'll begin by acknowledging someone who has joined me in the past at this table but is now here in a new capacity. The Fire Department has a new Chief of Department. John Sudnik has over 33 years of experience with the FDNY, including time spent serving as Manhattan Borough Commander and most recently as Chief of Fire Operations. With John as the highest ranking uniform member of the Department, we are in extraordinarily good hands.

2018 was a very busy year for the Department. We responded to over 1.7 million incidents. Of these, more than 1.4 million were medical calls. Compared to 2017, that was an increase of approximately 84,000 total responses, or 4.8%. Non-Life Threatening emergencies grew by almost 7%, and Life Threatening emergencies grew by 1%. Structural fires were up approximately 2%. We know that the reality of the modern day fire service is that we confront a growing number of calls each year.

The Department has also seen tragedy over the last year. We lost a hero when Lieutenant Michael Davidson died while operating at a fire in Harlem. Two FDNY members died last spring when the helicopter carrying Lieutenant Christopher Raguso and Fire Marshal Tripp Zanetis and their New York Air National Guard colleagues crashed in Iraq. This past January, Firefighter Steven Pollard was killed while operating at a motor vehicle accident on the Belt Parkway. The entire Department mourns the loss of these brave members.

One concerning development in 2018 was that the city finished the year with 88 fire deaths. This is an increase from the 73 deaths that we experienced in 2017. As the city's population grows, I have committed to strengthening the Department's outreach to the community to help prevent fire injuries and deaths.

We know that accomplishing our mission to save lives cannot be achieved solely by being reactive to emergencies. As I have detailed to this committee in the past, we also strive to be proactive in connecting with New Yorkers to provide them with an education and tools to protect themselves. In 2018, our Fire Safety Education teams made over 9,100 safety presentations, which was an increase of more than 1,100 from the prior year. A third of these presentations took place in schools so that our educators could discuss fire safety with students and their parents. With the help of councilmembers, we gave away almost



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65,000 smoke alarm batteries during the "Change Your Clocks, Change Your Batteries" campaign.

Last summer we hosted our Fourth Annual series of block parties. Over 7,000 New Yorkers attended events at firehouses and EMS stations across the city, receiving fire safety information and instruction. We also hosted Open Houses at all firehouses and EMS stations in the city. 25,000 New Yorkers attended these events and over 10,000 alarms were distributed.

We also know that our messaging and outreach is more potent when we engage partners to help us get our message out to the community. Working with the American Red Cross, we distributed 15,000 smoke alarms and we installed another 18,000. This included roughly 6,000 home visits, where residents receive working smoke alarms and learn about fire safety. After a series of tragic fires in the Bronx, we worked with the American Red Cross, New York City Emergency Management, the Mayor's office, and the Bronx Borough President on a series of 30 events between April and June, targeting neighborhoods where we thought the outreach would be most effective. In response to a series of fires in Southeast Queens, we provided educational fire safety posters to more than 60 faith-based organizations.

We partnered with the Department for the Aging to provide fire safety workshops in senior centers across the city. Since the inception, we've made presentations in approximately 100 locations. We also coordinated with the Department of Youth and Community Development to bring nearly 1,000 K-5 students from Beacon Afterschool programs to visit firehouses and receive fire safety education curriculum.

The outlook for pursuing valuable partnerships in 2019 is positive. With generous funding from the Mayor and the Council, we will soon be taking delivery of 60,000 smoke alarms, which we will distribute with our partners at the Council and install through our partners at the American Red Cross. We recently announced a program in coordination with the Administration for Children's Services in which we will train 2,000 frontline child welfare staff. These individuals will learn how to examine homes for potential fire hazards and be able to refer families for smoke alarm installations. We are also working to develop campaigns in partnership with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Mayor's Center for Faith-Based and Community-Based Partnerships, and the Department of Education.

Our Mobile CPR training program was also very successful in 2018. Educating New Yorkers to provide aid to others helps us save lives. We trained over 27,000 volunteers in compressions-only CPR. This included training 23,000 students at 110 schools.



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I'm happy to report that the most recent class to graduate from the firefighter academy – which consisted of promotional candidates from EMS – included 15 female graduates. This was the highest number of female candidates to graduate in a single class since 1982, which was the first class in which women were eligible. Through their brave service, these women will inspire women girls from across the city to follow in their footsteps. With the addition of these graduates, the Department now has the largest number of female firefighters in its history. We have a long way to go, but we are proud of the progress we are making.

The increase in the number of medical incidents that we respond to is a trend that has been experienced by emergency medical services across the country. Recently, the Department has seen a rapid growth – a 25% increase in the last decade – in the number of calls from stable patients who need care for minor medical injuries or management of non-life threatening chronic diseases. This practice is not only costly to the patient, but it creates a higher workload and reduces the availability of ambulances. Patients and municipalities would be better served by a more robust range of options beyond requiring EMS services to transport patients to hospitals.

A key challenge, though, has been antiquated Medicare regulations, followed in lock-step by Medicaid and many health insurance carriers, that classify EMS as a transportation service, reimbursing only if the patient is transported to a hospital's emergency department. However, working with EMS services nationwide, FDNY has led the way in pursuing changes to the way that Medicare reimburses these responses. The federal Medicare program has agreed to begin adopting changes. The current system is no longer working for patients or EMS systems. Much work and planning remains, but we have begun removing the financial disincentives to changing it. By forming partnerships with community-based healthcare options and driving innovative changes to the way that we operate, these changes can break the current unsustainable cycle and improve healthcare for all patients.

The Department has also made progress on several new or renovated facilities. Among the highlights, property has been acquired and the Department of Design and Construction (DDC) has selected an architect for a new firehouse for Engine Company 268 in the Rockaways. DDC has begun the design for EMS Station 17 in the Bronx. Construction is nearing completion on a new facility for Rescue 2, which will be a 21,400 square foot fire station in Brooklyn. DDC estimates that the work will be complete in Fall 2019. We are also about to begin construction on a major expansion and renovation of EMS Station 20 in the Bronx. Finally – as the Chair is aware – Squad Company 8 began operating on Staten



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Island in December 2018. We were gratified to get it up and running within five months of announcing the creation of the company.

The Mayor's preliminary budget includes a series of small additions to the Fire Department's budget. This includes funding for 20 additional lines in the Bureau of Fire Prevention, which will help the Department to better serve small businesses by improving customer service and maximizing the efficiency of plan examinations. It also includes OTPS funding to support Information Technology projects and radio maintenance for PSAC II, the City's Public Safety Answering Center located in the Bronx. Further, the budget will fund an additional three staff lines in the Department's Equal Employment Opportunity office. These lines will be used to hire attorneys who will provide training to the Fire Department workforce and ensure that thorough EEO investigations occur in a timely manner.

It is the privilege of the men and women of the FDNY to protect the lives and property of the people of New York City. Our challenge is to provide the highest level of service even as the number of calls and incidents grow each year. We thank the Council for its partnership and assistance in meeting that challenge.

I would be happy to take your questions at this time.



Testimony of Joseph J. Esposito

Commissioner

New York City Department of Emergency Management

Before the New York City Council Committee on Fire and Emergency Management

March 7, 2019

Good morning Chairperson Borelli and members of the Committee on Fire and Emergency Management. I am Joe Esposito, Commissioner of New York City Department of Emergency Management, and I am happy to be here to talk about our fiscal year 2020 budget.

We have had a busy year. In 2018, we activated the Emergency Operations Center 16 times for a total of 59 days. That includes eight winter-weather events, a building vacate due to structural collapse, boiler outages at a NYCHA facility, Hurricane Maria transitional housing assistance, a heat activation, three flash floods, and the Flatiron Steam Main Explosion. During extreme weather events, we held citywide calls for elected officials and continuously sent out notifications for localized incidents in specific districts.

In 2018, we monitored 3,661 incidents and sent our citywide incident coordinators to 797 incidents. We held or participated in 105 interagency exercises to make sure plans are understood and necessary protocols for plans are ready to be implemented as needed. Notify NYC sent out 2,116 messages in 2018, bringing totals to more than 12,400 messages since inception. The Notify NYC mobile application currently has over 69,700 downloads; this, in addition to growth in our traditional subscribership puts us over 742,200 registrants. Notify NYC is also in the midst of a historic expansion project to fulfill City Council legislation requiring emergency messages to be issued to non-English speakers in the seven most commonly spoken languages in the city. However in order to further service New Yorkers, Notify NYC is working to meet and exceed the June 2019 requirement by issuing emergency messages in 12 languages. Beginning in June, in addition to the existing account customizations, users can identify their preferred language at the point of registration. We are proud and excited for this new development.

Our community outreach and engagement activities continue to grow, and you have likely seen us in your neighborhood at meetings, town halls, fairs, mobile office hours and other community events. In total, we participated in 943 Ready NY events with more than 100,000 people attending and distributed more than 800,000 emergency planning guides. We also launched two new preparedness videos focused on people with disabilities, access and functional needs. We graduated six new classes of CERT volunteers, volunteers who continue to work alongside City employees to prepare New Yorkers for emergencies as well as provide services during disasters. We also thank Councilmembers who have provided us with discretionary funding to donate go-bags to their constituents, and we recommend other Councilmembers consider doing the same as this tangible benefit is very helpful in communities, especially among vulnerable and senior populations.

We hosted a Disabilities, Access and Functional Needs Symposium in December, attended by over 160 people. The Community Preparedness program launched a new training for community partners

called Community Preparedness Boot Camp. The Boot Camp assists local community networks with their emergency planning and connects them with our resources. We also launched the Community Preparedness Council in September, which meets three times a year and is a forum for Boot Camp participants to discuss emergency planning on the community level and other emergency management topics.

We continue to look ahead to find new ways to prepare the city and our citizens for the next emergency. With that, let me now provide a snapshot of our budget for next year.

Our projected total Fiscal Year 2020 City Tax Levy expense budget is \$30.9 million. We rely on our City tax levy expense budget to support the majority of the agency's administrative, technological and operational costs.

The projected Fiscal Year 2020 Personnel Services budget is \$7.1 million, which supports the 66 personnel lines paid directly through our tax levy-funds. This includes \$1.6 million in funding for 18 staff members dedicated to working on increasing communication and services to people with access and functional needs. Our other staffing is supported through grant funds and personnel on assignment from multiple City agencies.

Our projected Fiscal Year 2020 Other Than Personnel Services budget is \$23.8 million, which covers all agency operating and administrative costs. There is virtually no discretionary funding in this budget. These funds are designated to cover our warehouse lease, utilities, and telecommunications costs including the maintenance and operations of our Emergency Operations Center and back-up facilities. This money also supports our fleet and all additional equipment, supplies and materials needed to run the agency.

The agency receives grant funding to support many of our core programs. In the past year, we secured \$25 million in federal funding, primarily through the Urban Areas Security Initiative grant. This funding is vital to our ability to run many of our finest initiatives, including the Ready New York public education program, Community Emergency Response Team program, Continuity of Operations Program, Geographic Information Systems, Training and Exercises, Watch Command and Response, and Citywide Incident Management Systems planning, and the Emergency Supply Stockpile. We work with City Hall, OMB, the City's Congressional delegation and our partner agencies to push for full homeland security funding in future years; this money supports critical operations within ours and several other agencies' budgets and is critical to the City.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to continue working with the Council on issues pertaining to emergency preparedness and response. I am happy to take your questions.



The Uniformed EMT's, Paramedics and Inspectors – F.D.N.Y.

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As we are all well aware Congress failed to rescind Disproportionate Share Hospital payment cuts that became effective on October 1, thereby reducing the critical federal funding that reimburses hospitals through the Medicaid program for uncompensated health care costs. These cuts will decimate New York's hospitals and fall hardest on its public and safety net hospitals that are already strained and serve the neediest patient populations.

Even now EMS budgets are razor-thin across the state. As a result of the Whitehouse Administration budget cuts Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's proposed 2019 budget would require further cuts in services.

As part of the revisions to the Health and Mental Hygiene bill (S.1507, A.2007), the proposal would eliminate Medicaid payments for low-income and elderly patients insured by both Medicare and Medicaid — a decision that could cost all EMS agencies statewide an estimated total of \$14 million per year. Additionally, a 2017 New York State Department of Health report showed ambulance providers are already substantially short-changed by Medicaid and recommended rate increases of \$31.4 million in 2017.

This financial Armageddon is not a stand-alone issue. Increasing call volume, a growing population and a

shrinking department budget will spell trouble for a system already under back breaking stress. The EMS providers handle 82% of the call volume with just 14% of the Fire Department Budget, while fire suppression handles 18% of the call volume with 70% of the budget. It is becoming imperative that the budget be aligned with the reality of the situation we are facing. Any budget reduction to The Emergency medical Service will result in a loss of ambulance shifts on a daily basis, which when coupled with the current staffing issues will result in a response that creeps up to unacceptable levels.



Uniformed Emergency Medical Service Officers Union

FDNY, Local 3621, DC37, AFSCME, NYSPEC, AFL-CIO

Vincent Variale
President

March 6, 2019

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DC 37 Representative

Tracey Ziemba

Good Morning, Chairman Joseph Borelli and distinguished members of the City Council. My name is Vincent Variale. I am president of Local 3621, The Uniformed EMS Officers Union representing over 500 EMS Lieutenants and Captains of the New York City Fire Department Emergency Medical Service Bureau. I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The EMS Bureau of the FDNY has an abundance of pilot programs and contingency plans to address the many operational needs and emergency scenarios. However, the ability to adequately implement and operate these plans has been severely lacking.

This year marks twenty-three years since the EMS merger into the FDNY. The genuine concern demonstrated by our Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro for the issues that would improve the quality of life for EMS personnel and the services provided to the people of this City are appreciated. However, many of the issues that have negatively impacted the service for years continue even today.

When EMS worked under the Health and Hospital Corporation, we were poorly compensated, severely understaffed, lacked an adequate span of control ratio and required additional stations throughout the City. These same issues continue to plague EMS and the lack of retention, currently at 60% with less than three years' experience hinders our ability to provide the best pre-hospital medical care.

Sometime after the merger the City Council passed local laws 18 & 19 providing uniformed status for members of the EMS workforce. The purpose of this legislative accomplishment was to provide EMS with the same level of support that is provided to the other emergency first responders and uniformed services. Unfortunately, that objective was not achieved.

While campaigning for a second term, Mayor de Blasio promised to address the inequalities that exist and bring the people of this City fairness and equality. I ask the members of this committee and the entire City Council to hold the Mayor to that promise, provide EMS with the funding needed to address the issues mentioned and deliver the fairness and equality he has promised.

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Vincent Variale

Vincent Variale



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DAVID LIN
President

BENJAMIN CHOU
Vice President

Date: March 7, 2019

Memo: Committee on Fire & Emergency Management - Fiscal 2020 Preliminary Budget Hearing

Greetings Committee Chair, Joseph C. Borelli and Committee Members; Fernando Cabrera, Alicka Ampy-Samuel, Justin Brannan and Alan N. Maisel.

We are from the FDNY Phoenix Society, and our objective is to be united in the effort of promoting the interests and welfare of New York City Fire Department (FDNY) personnel who are Asian, Asian Americans or those of Asian descent. The FDNY Phoenix Society seeks to enhance the Asian American community and New York City Fire Department (FDNY) by networking amongst those interested in professional and personal development, while emphasizing the preservation of Asian American identity. The society provides resources and guidance that inspire, empower, develop, and support professionalism within the FDNY to become community-oriented leaders. The FDNY Phoenix Society specifically strives to promote Community Relations, Career Growth, Leadership, Networking, Public Service, and most importantly family-oriented events.

The FDNY Phoenix Society started with four founders in Fall 2012 at 65 Bayard Street: Candidate Physical Abilities Test & Fitness Awareness Program Training Coordinator David Lin, Captain Steven Lee, Captain Man Wai Law, and Deputy Chief Sophia Kwok. The New York City Fire Department officially recognized the Society in Spring 2013. Since then, our Society has been growing as each day passes.

We have been acknowledged for our outstanding efforts by representatives throughout the city. We received citations and congratulatory recognitions from US Congress Member Grace Meng, NY State Assembly Member Yuh-Line Niou, David Weprin, and New York City Council Member Margaret Chin. Several news articles have highlighted the FDNY Phoenix Society's accomplishments, such as our Parade participation (Lunar New Year, Filipino and Indian Independence Day), Asian Pacific Islander Heritage Month Celebration, recruitment efforts, and fire safety workshops. The most recent achievement that Ben Chou (FDNY Phoenix Society Vice President) and I are most proud of is acquiring \$ 13,500.00 of discretionary funding from New York City Council Member Margaret Chin (Manhattan) and Peter Koo (Flushing) for Firefighter, EMS and Administrative training, and career advancement for all bureaus. This will result in increased Asian growth from entry to executive staff level throughout the department. We applied for \$35,000.00 for Fiscal 2020 City Council discretionary funding, and hope to further our efforts.

The Society's paramount goal is to build a department relationship between the Asian community and the city it serves. We demonstrate this by having Asian Recruiters during our career campaigns and spreading fire safety and bystander CPR education in communities via native tongue. A shining example of this is our weekly Language Class at Flushing High School, where our Department members have the opportunity to learn one of the most common languages spoken by the Asian community and learn more about Asian culture. The class, which is sponsored by the FDNY Foundation, is in its fourth year of teaching Mandarin Chinese and we are very pleased with its success.

We, the FDNY, are the innovative leaders of fire departments around the world. We are the Bravest, Best and Brightest that the country has to offer. No one can do a better job than we can when it comes to the fire floor, medical emergencies, building inspections, Fire Safety Education, FDNY standby CPR, community relations, and recruiting the next generation of first responders. We hope to continue to

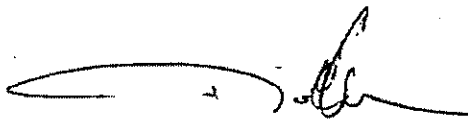
attract new members to advance our efforts in ensuring that our Department reflects the communities it serves.

These are 3 major items that we can work together to enhance:

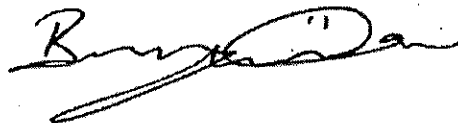
- Continued Recruitment effort in Asian communities – Firefighter, EMS, FPI and Administrative staff support
 - Firefighter & EMS Mobile Academy in Asian communities
 - Board of Education
 - Community Boards
 - Elected Officials demographic areas
 - Physical and nutritional training & workshop
 - Updated physical training tools for the Department
 - Stairmaster
 - Jacob ladder
 - Ski ERG
 - Assault runner
 - Nutritionist staff on hand
 - Aide in healthier life style
 - Preventive measure in health fitness
 - Cardiac arrest
 - Weight reduction
 - Preventing medical leave / disability retirement cost
- Increase Fire Safety Education and FDNY CPR in underrepresented neighborhoods in multi linguistic platform
 - Currently there are approximately 10 daily events, with less than one are represented in Asian neighborhoods
 - There are no Asian Outreach Liaison since 2017 (a position I held from 2016-2017), therefore no new relations between the FDNY and the Asian Community has been build
- Block Parties – Community engagement
 - Expand from the only location, Flushing (held between 2017 & 2018) and partnering/supporting local business to showcase ethnic food from the standard hamburger and hotdog
 - Manhattan
 - Chinatown
 - Brooklyn
 - Sunset Park
 - Bensonhurst
 - Bay Parkway
 - Sheephead Bay
 - Queens
 - Sunnyside
 - Jackson Heights
 - Elmhurst
 - Murray Hill
 - Bayside
 - Jamaica

We would like to thank the Fire & Emergency Management Committee, for your time, and continuing to fight for the city of New York.

Respectfully Yours,



David Lin
President of the FDNY Phoenix Society



Benjamin Chou
Vice President of the FDNY Phoenix Society

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I represent: FDNY Phoenix Society

Address: P.O. Box 20442 Brooklyn NY

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Address: 1814 2nd Stree Brooklyn NY 11228

I represent: FDNY Phoenix Society

Address: P.O. Box 20442 Brooklyn NY 11202

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Name: Commissioner Joseph Esposito

Address: 165 Cadman Plaza East

I represent: NYC Dept. of Emergency Management

Address: _____

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Name: OREN BARZILAY

Address: 150-39 14th WILFSTON NY 11557

I represent: LOCAL 2507 PRESIDENT

Address: _____

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Name: Michael Greco

Address: _____

I represent: Local 2507

Address: 150-39 14 Ave

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Name: Nancy Carbone

Address: 199 Van Bunt St

I represent: Friends of Firefighters

Address: _____

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Date: 3/7/19

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Name: David Negro

Address: 9 metrotech Brooklyn

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

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Name: Laura Kavanagh

Address: 9 West 12th St Brooklyn

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

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Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Sadnik

Address: 9 West 12th St Brooklyn

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Chief Boon

Address: 9 West 12th St Brooklyn

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

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Name: Stephen Rush

Address: 9 Metrotech Brooklyn

I represent: FDNY

Address: _____

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/19

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Name: Oren Barzilay

Address: 125 Barclay Street, NY NY 10007

I represent: President, L. 2507, DC 37

Address: Unarmed EMTs + Paramedics FDNY

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☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: 3/7/19

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Vincent Variale

Address: 125 Barclay Street NY NY 10007

I represent: President, L. 3621, DC 37

Address: Unarmed EMS Officers, FDNY

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