

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

March 7, 2019
Start: 10:07 a.m.
Recess: 12:00 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
ALICKA AMPRY-SAMUEL
JUSTIN L. BRANNAN
FERNANDO CABRERA
ALAN N. MAISEL

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

3 Daniel Nigro
4 Commissioner of the New York City Fire Department
5 FDNY

6 Laura Kavanagh
7 First Deputy Commissioner of the New York City
8 Fire Department, FDNY

9 John Sudnik
10 Chief of Department of the New York City Fire
11 Department, FDNY

12 James Booth
13 Chief of EMS of the New York City Fire Department
14 FDNY

15 Stephen Rush
16 Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Finance of
17 The New York City Fire Department, FDNY

18 Joe Esposito
19 Commissioner of the New York City Emergency
20 Management

21 Stacy Rosenfeld
22 Deputy Commissioner for the Administration and
23 Finance at the New York City Emergency Management

24 Oren Barzilay
25 President of FDNY EMS Local 2507 Uniformed EMTs,
Paramedics and Fire Inspectors

Vincent Variale
President of Local 3621, Uniformed EMS Officers
Union

Michael Greco
Vice President of FDNY EMS Local 2507

Benjamin Chou
Vice President of FDNY Phoenix Society

David Lin
President of the FDNY Phoenix Society

2 [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Good morning. My
4 name is Joseph Borelli and I'm the Chair of the Fire
5 and Emergency Management Committee. I want to start
6 off by congratulating newly appointed Chief of
7 Department, Chief John Sudnik, applause, applause
8 maybe...

9 [applause]

10 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And Chief of Fire
11 Operations Thomas Richardson, is he here, he's not
12 here but we'll give him applause anyway..

13 [applause]

14 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: With that being
15 said the committee will review the department's
16 proposed budget for FY 2020, it's 2019 to 2023
17 capital commitment plan, the ten-year capital
18 strategy, relevant sections of the preliminary
19 Mayor's management report for FY '19. Second, we will
20 hear from the New York City Emergency Management
21 Department. The Fire Department's physical
22 preliminary 2020 budget totals 2.05 billion with
23 17,321 positions. We had a productive budget process
24 last year with adding funding for a new squad company
25 on Staten Island. I'm proud of the work that we did

2 together in order to achieve this and I'm looking
3 forward to working with the Commissioner and Mayor to
4 bolster the city's budget in different ways. However,
5 we still have a lot of work ahead. Hudson Yard is
6 opening on March 15th, 2019, the Council continues to
7 monitor the Department's diversity recruitment plan
8 and while uniform, uniform over time has been right
9 sized, we have to start monitoring civilian overtime
10 spending. Lastly, we have to assess the need for
11 additional fire and EMS resources throughout the city
12 and continue to look how best to improve EMS
13 operations through expense and capital budgets. New
14 for fiscal 2020, the city has set a target of 750
15 million citywide as part of the program to eliminate
16 the gap or PEG as it's affectionately known by those
17 in government. We are interested in learning about
18 how this will impact the FDNY. The committee hold
19 oversight hearings on various topics last year; the
20 EMS response to the opioid epidemic, the impact of
21 automatic sprinkler systems on fire suppression, the
22 impact of new development on Long Island City on
23 emergency management services and recently we held an
24 oversight hearing on the protection of EMS workers
25 from job related violence. As the city experiences

2 substantial increases in call volume for medical
3 emergencies from one year to the next, the department
4 has added, added additional tours and increased its
5 EMS classes at the academy but has not addressed the
6 capital needs to adequately support the growing
7 demands for EMS services. Additionally, the budget
8 doesn't include any additional resources to address
9 fire and EMS needs for Hudson Yards. I am interested
10 in how the budget also addresses those needs because
11 an increase in call volume for medical emergencies
12 and the opening of Hudson Yards are sure to bring
13 different challenges. I want to make sure our
14 committees are adequately served, and our fire
15 fighters and EMS staff have the resources to meet and
16 adapt to the growing demand and changes. The
17 committee will like to know what the department plans
18 to do to address these deficiencies as well as an
19 update on the department's recruitment plan and the
20 squad company on Staten Island, any plans for EMS and
21 what new needs are added in fiscal 2020. I also want
22 to make sure we thank our committee staff for their
23 hard work, by the way they put this in there, this is
24 like... they... you know they write this and add their
25 own shout out which is great; our Finance Analyst Jin

2 Lee; Unit Head Eisha Wright; Committee Counsel Josh
3 Kingsley who's unfortunately not with us today;
4 Policy Analyst Will Hongach and my Chief of Staff
5 Frank Mascia. I'd like to welcome and thank
6 Commissioner Nigro and our firefighters, EMTs,
7 paramedics and the department civilian staff for the
8 work they do. I am looking forward to hearing from
9 the Commissioner and I will swear you in.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Could you please raise
11 your right hands? Do you swear or affirm to tell the
12 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in
13 your testimony today and to respond honestly to
14 Council Member questions? You may begin.

15 DANIEL NIGRO: Well good morning Chair
16 Borelli and Council Members present. Thank you for
17 your... the opportunity to speak with you today about
18 the preliminary budget for fiscal year 2020 for the
19 Fire Department. I'm joined this morning by First
20 Deputy Commissioner Laura Kavanagh, Chief of
21 Department John Sudnik, Chief of EMS James Booth, and
22 Assistant Commissioner for Budget and Finance Stephen
23 Rush. I'll begin by acknowledging someone who you've
24 just acknowledged who's joined me in the past at this
25 table but now is here in a new capacity, the Fire

2 Department has a new Chief of Department. John Sudnik
3 has over 33 years of experience with the FDNY,
4 including time spent as Manhattan Borough Commander
5 and most recently as Chief of Fire Operations. With
6 John as the highest-ranking uniformed member of the
7 department, we are in extraordinarily good hands.

8 2018 was a very busy year for the department. We
9 responded to over 1.7 million incidents. Of these,
10 more than 1.4 million were medical calls. Compared to
11 2017, that was an increase of approximately 84,000
12 total responses or 4.8 percent. Non-life-threatening
13 emergencies grew by seven percent and life-
14 threatening emergencies by one percent. Structural
15 fires were up approximately two percent. We know that
16 the reality of the modern-day fire service is that we
17 confront a growing number of calls each year. The
18 department has also seen tragedy over the last year.
19 We lost a hero when Lieutenant Michael Davidson died
20 while operating at a fire in Harlem. Two FDNY members
21 died last spring when the helicopter carrying
22 Lieutenant Christopher Raguso and Fire Marshal Tripp
23 Zanetis and their New York Air National Guard
24 colleagues crashed in Iraq. This past January,
25 Firefighter Steven Pollard was killed while operating

2 at a motor vehicle accident on the Belt Parkway. The
3 entire department mourns the loss of these brave
4 members. One concerning development in 2018 was this...
5 that the city finished the year with 88 fire deaths.
6 This is an increase from the 73 deaths that we
7 experienced in 2017. As the city's population grows,
8 I have committed to strengthening the department's
9 outreach to the community to help prevent fire
10 injuries and deaths. We know that accomplishing our
11 mission to save lives cannot be achieved solely by
12 being reactive to emergencies. As I have detailed to
13 this committee in the past, we also strive to be
14 proactive in connecting with New Yorkers to provide
15 them with an education and tools to protect
16 themselves. In 2018, our Fire Safety Education teams
17 made over 9,100 safety presentations, which was an
18 increase of more than 1,100 from the previous year. A
19 third of these presentations took place in schools so
20 that our educators could discuss fire safety with
21 students and their parents. With the help of Council
22 Members, we gave away almost 65,000 smoke alarms...
23 smoke alarm batteries during the change your clock,
24 change your batteries campaign. Last summer we hosted
25 our fourth annual series of block parties. Over 7,000

1
2 New Yorkers attended events at firehouses and EMS
3 stations across the city, receiving fire safety
4 information and instruction. We also hosted open
5 houses at all fire houses and EMS stations. In the
6 city 25,000 New Yorkers attended these events and
7 over 10,000 alarms were distributed. We also know
8 that our messaging and outreach is more potent when
9 we engage partners to help us get our message out.
10 Working with the American Red Cross, we distributed
11 15,000 smoke alarms and we installed another 18,000.
12 This included roughly 6,000 home visits, where
13 residents received working smoke alarms and learn
14 about fire safety. After a series of tragic fires in
15 the Bronx, we worked with the American Red Cross, New
16 York City Emergency Management, the Mayor's Office,
17 and the Bronx Borough President on a series of 30
18 events between April and June, targeting
19 neighborhoods where we thought the outreach would be
20 most effective. In response to a series of fires in
21 Southeast Queens, we provided educational fire safety
22 posters to more than 60 faith-based organizations. We
23 partnered with the Department for the Aging to
24 provide fire safety workshops in senior centers
25 across the city. Since the inception, we've made

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 presentations in approximately 100 locations. We also
3 coordinated with the Department of Youth and
4 Community Development to bring nearly 1,000 K through
5 five students from Beacon Afterschool programs to
6 visit firehouses and receive fire safety education
7 curriculum. The outlook for pursuing valuable
8 partnerships in 2019 is positive. With generous
9 funding from the Mayor and the Council, we will soon
10 be taking delivery of 60,000 smoke alarms, which we
11 will distribute with our partners at the Council and
12 install through our partners at the American Red
13 Cross. We recently announced a program in
14 coordination with the Administration for Children's
15 Services in which we will train 2,000 frontline child
16 welfare staff. These individuals will learn how to
17 examine homes for potential fire hazards and be able
18 to refer families for smoke alarm installations. We
19 are also working to develop campaigns in partnership
20 with the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, the
21 Mayor's Center for Faith Based and Community Based
22 Partnership and the Department of Education. Our
23 Mobile CPR training programs will... were... was also
24 very successful in 2018. Educating New Yorkers to
25 provide aid to others helps us save lives. We trained

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 over 27,000 volunteers in compressions only CPR. This
3 included training 23,000 students at 110 schools. I'm
4 happy to report that the most recent class to
5 graduate from the firefighter academy, which
6 consisted of promotional candidates from EMS,
7 included 15 female graduates. This was the highest
8 number of female candidates to graduate in a single
9 class since 1982, which was the first class in which
10 women were eligible. Through their brave service,
11 these women will inspire women and girls from across
12 the city to follow in their footsteps. With the
13 addition of these graduates, the department now has
14 the largest number of female firefighters in its
15 history. We have a long way to go, but we are proud
16 of the progress we are making. The increase in the
17 number of medical incidents that we respond to is a
18 trend that has been experienced by emergency medical
19 services across the country. Recently, the department
20 has seen a rapid growth, a 25 percent increase in the
21 last decade, in the number of calls from stable
22 patients who need care for minor medical injuries or
23 management of non-life-threatening chronic diseases.
24 This practice is not only costly to the patient, but
25 it creates a higher workload and reduces the

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 availability of ambulances. Patients and
3 municipalities would be better served by a more
4 robust range of options beyond requiring EMS services
5 to transport patients to hospitals. A key challenge,
6 though, has been the antiquated Medicare regulations,
7 followed in lock step by Medicaid and many health
8 insurance carriers, that classify EMS as a
9 transportation service, reimbursing only if the
10 patient is transported to a hospital's emergency
11 department. However, working with EMS services
12 nationwide, FDNY has led the way in pursuing changes
13 to the way that Medicare reimburses these responses.
14 The federal Medicare program has agreed to begin
15 adopting changes. The current system is no longer
16 working for patients or EMS systems. Much work and
17 planning remain, but we have begun removing the
18 financial disincentives to changing it. By forming
19 partnerships with community-based healthcare options
20 and driving innovative changes to the way that we
21 operate, these changes can break the current
22 unsustainable cycle and improve healthcare for all
23 patients. The department has also made progress on
24 several new or renovated facilities. Among the
25 highlights, property has been acquired and the

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 Department of Design and Construction has selected an
3 architect for a new firehouse for engine company 268
4 in the Rockaways. DDC has begun the design for EMS
5 station 17 in the Bronx. Construction is nearing
6 completion on a new facility for rescue two, which
7 will be a 21,400 square foot fire station in
8 Brooklyn. DDC estimates the work will be complete in
9 the fall of 2019. We are also about to begin
10 construction on a major expansion and renovation of
11 EMS station 20 in the Bronx. Finally, as the Chair is
12 aware, Squad Company eight began operating in Staten
13 Island in December of 2018. We are gratified to get
14 it up and running within five months of announcing
15 the creation of the company. The Mayor's preliminary
16 budget includes a series of small additions to the
17 Fire Department's budget. This includes funding for
18 20 additional lines in the Bureau of Fire Prevention,
19 which will help the department to better serve small
20 businesses by improving customer service and
21 maximizing the efficiency of plan examinations. It
22 also includes OTPS funding to support information
23 technology projects and radio maintenance for PSAC
24 II, the city's Public Safety Answering Center located
25 in the Bronx. Further, the budget will fund an

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 additional three staff lines in the department's
3 Equal Employment Opportunity office. These lines will
4 be used to hire attorneys who will provide training
5 to the Fire Department workforce and ensure that
6 thorough EEO investigations occur in a timely manner.
7 It is the privilege of the men and women of the FDNY
8 to protect the lives and property of the people of
9 New York City. Our challenge is to provide the
10 highest level of service even as the number of calls
11 and incidents grow each year. We thank the Council
12 for its partnership and assistance in meeting that
13 challenge. And now I'd be happy to take your
14 questions.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you

16 Commissioner. I don't know if anyone's told you this
17 but we, we remarked how soothing your voice is so if
18 you ever leave public service books on tape would be
19 a, a welcomed career moves for you, it's... it was
20 very, very nice voice. We're joined by Council Member
21 Ampry-Samuel from Brooklyn, good morning. And I want
22 to just point out that anyone wishing to testify can
23 fill out one of the snazzy forms and give them to the
24 Sergeant at Arms to my left, to your right. First...
25 Commissioner the first question is, is sort the one

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 we always ask, were there any new needs that the
3 department requested that weren't included in the
4 preliminary budget?

5 DANIEL NIGRO: I think there's always a
6 few small items, the largest item would be an
7 expansion of the fly car pilot but I would say that
8 that's certainly not off the table and the department
9 is quite optimistic that we will at some point
10 receive that funding and be able to expand what we
11 think is a very important issue for the department.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: When is the pilot
13 scheduled to end?

14 DANIEL NIGRO: It had no scheduled end
15 date.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Do...

17 DANIEL NIGRO: Right now, it's... the pilot
18 stage is over and it's operating... it's, it's in
19 place, it's permanent.

20 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: But there, there is
21 data to indicate that the program has been
22 successful?

23 DANIEL NIGRO: We do believe that it has
24 been successful, we are training additional
25 paramedics, right now we have more people in school

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 and that will give us the ability when we receive the
3 funding to be able to expand it further in the Bronx
4 to be able to make a bigger impact.

5 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Great. Obviously
6 with the 750 million dollars PEG the FDNY target and
7 correct me if I'm wrong is 6.5 million, can you just
8 go through again where we would see those cuts come
9 from?

10 DANIEL NIGRO: Well certainly known of
11 them will be in our operational portion of the
12 department and where we see the ability to reach that
13 PEG is through additional revenues both from fire
14 prevention inspection and from ambulance calls.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: We're also joined
16 by Council Member Brannan a little late, a little
17 late but it's okay. So, you, you said nothing is
18 going to come from the frontline services so there's,
19 there's no current change to uniformed staff other
20 than the five additional spots?

21 DANIEL NIGRO: That's correct.

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Right, okay. And
23 there's no... there's no change in the... in the pace of
24 training new firefighters or EMS operators?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 DANIEL NIGRO: Absolutely not, there's no
3 hiring freeze or firefighters or EMTs or paramedics.

4 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And will this
5 impact any civilian positions?

6 DANIEL NIGRO: Well we do have some
7 current vacancies in civilian positions, some of
8 those we do anticipate may not be filled this year.

9 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: But overall there
10 will be an increase of 79 total positions within the
11 department?

12 DANIEL NIGRO: What does that say? There
13 is a, a hiring freeze on civilian positions right now
14 and... but not again not on EMTs or paramedics or
15 firefighters.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: That would be
17 scrapped though in the new budget year... for the new
18 74 positions?

19 STEPHEN RUSH: For the hiring freeze
20 we're awaiting the final guidelines from OMB but
21 generally speaking it looks like every position that
22 is approved in our budget will be up for review when
23 it's vacant.

24 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And the, the 74
25 civilian positions you are seeking you mentioned 20

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 of them were for the Bureau of Fire Prevention,
3 could... can you just take us through the other 54, you
4 mentioned there were attorneys for EEO complaints,
5 how, how many attorneys?

6 STEPHEN RUSH: I think... [cross-talk]

7 DANIEL NIGRO: The one in my... in my
8 report we were hiring three EEO attorneys and 25
9 prevention inspectors.

10 STEPHEN RUSH: Right that's the... that's
11 the financial plan is reflecting 20 and... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay. Okay, do you
13 have any employees making minimum wage in the
14 department and will this impact you, no?

15 STEPHEN RUSH: We do not.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: On the capital
17 side the, the Rock... engine... 268 in Rockaway we, we... I
18 recall speaking about that last year, what sort of
19 has been the delay, I mean there's an architecture
20 now... architecture now on board, what sort of has been
21 the problem with that?

22 DANIEL NIGRO: I don't think there's been
23 any problem, I think it's the, the process that the
24 number of steps it goes through, the number of
25 approvals that's required before building begins is

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 quite lengthy and, and quite complicated but we're at
3 the stage now where it's in the design stage and we
4 can move forward.

5 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Do, do you know if
6 you have to go through the Public Design Commission
7 or not?

8 DANIEL NIGRO: I do not.

9 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay, hopefully you
10 don't because that would be really, really crazy if
11 you did. When EMS merged with FDNY in '98 the
12 proposal was to have 70 stations however we now have
13 35 and I think you mentioned we're adding, adding one
14 or renovating one, what has been sort of the long-
15 term delay in implementing the, the full 70 stations?

16 DANIEL NIGRO: Well I don't think... I, I,
17 I don't recall, and I was certainly involved quite
18 directly in the merger that 70 stations was, a
19 written in stone target, I think it might have been
20 a, a goal at that point that's been reevaluated many
21 times since.

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay. So, just to...
23 just to go back to that head count number the, the
24 number we see in our... in our numbers from FY '19 to
25 FY '20 was a difference of 74 full time civilian

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 positions and five full time uniforms so that's... that
3 was from the... [cross-talk]

4 STEPHEN RUSH: That was from our plan.

5 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Is that... so, is
6 that not the correct number?

7 STEPHEN RUSH: I'm just looking by the
8 financial plan that is 20 for fire prevention, three
9 in addition for EEO and then as a technical
10 adjustment of eight positions.

11 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay, well that
12 certainly answers for the 50 I was talking about that
13 don't seem to exist so that's, that's good. Okay,
14 how... [cross-talk]

15 STEPHEN RUSH: Excuse me, it could be on
16 the EMS side it which is classified as civilian so
17 that could be... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay... [cross-talk]

19 STEPHEN RUSH: ...where the confusion is.

20 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay, thank you.

21 STEPHEN RUSH: I'm just thinking of
22 regular civilians.

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: No, right, yeah it,
24 it doesn't discern here of whether it is, or it
25 isn't... [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 STEPHEN RUSH: It's E... it's EMS.

3 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: I mean is there
4 any... would there be any good reason though to reduce
5 the number of EMS operators?

6 STEPHEN RUSH: No, I mean this the growth
7 in EMS head count.

8 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay. How, how many
9 ambulance stations have been integrated with
10 firehouse, firehouses and, and does the department
11 ever plan on moving away from integrated ambulance
12 stations in the future?

13 DANIEL NIGRO: Well right now there are
14 two, they would have to be new facilities because of,
15 you know our fire stations are barely able to hold
16 our fire apparatus, it certainly wouldn't be off the
17 table if we had the, the available facilities or if
18 new facilities were being built that's certainly
19 something we would do but as you can see we don't
20 build new facilities very often and therefore it
21 can't be done very rapidly.

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: In the FY 2019 to
23 '23 capital plan there's a project, Fort Totten
24 infrastructure and EMS expansion and I think it's,
25 it's been there for a little while, it doesn't seem

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 like there's any funding for this project, why is
3 this not a priority or, or is it a priority and what
4 is the long term plan for funding it?

5 STEPHEN RUSH: We've been in discussion
6 with OMB with, with regard to Fort Totten for several
7 years and we have presented a plan, a long term plan
8 to revitalize the Fort and make it... expand classroom
9 space so we can increase the number of EMTs and
10 paramedics that we train and there is a funding
11 request in the capital budget that is now being
12 reviewed by OMB as part of the executive plan.

13 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Switching gears for
14 a... for a moment to a current situation, can we just
15 discuss the, the situation with OLR and the fifth man
16 at 20 companies, is that... I understand the, the UFA
17 numbers have... were a fraction of a percentage lower
18 than the contract... the contract allows, is there
19 still a, a plan to pull the fifth man from those 20
20 engine companies?

21 DANIEL NIGRO: Right now, we're not
22 pulling the, the fifth man from those 20 units and
23 we'll, we'll see how that... how that goes, the number
24 is very... slightly above the threshold right now but
25 we have not reduced the 20 units.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Of, of any of the
3 line of duty injuries that led to those folks missing
4 work were any of them not accurately recorded, was
5 any... are there any fake injuries, are there any...

6 DANIEL NIGRO: I don't think we have fake
7 injuries, I think we... our members frequently get
8 injures and report those injuries, it's a very... being
9 a firefighter and a fire officer is very dangerous
10 and it results in a large number of injuries each
11 year.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, why then would
13 the... would the stick and carrot approach, the, the
14 stick end up jeopardizing safety of not just the
15 firefighters in those companies but sort of the
16 public?

17 DANIEL NIGRO: I, I think this was a
18 negotiation between the city and the union quite a
19 number of years ago as to how we would deal with it
20 and if it wants to be... if they want to negotiate it
21 again I think that would be fine and see if we could
22 come up with an alternate position.

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, so, in your
24 opinion would it be better than to have any type of
25 retribution or, or response to line of duty

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 percentages going higher than normal, would it be
3 better to have some sort of, you know maybe a perk
4 related?

5 DANIEL NIGRO: I, I think I would
6 entertain any other possible solutions to this issue.

7 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: No ice cream on
8 Fridays type of... type of stuff rather than...

9 DANIEL NIGRO: Now you're getting into
10 some real serious things... [cross-talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Right... [cross-talk]

12 DANIEL NIGRO: I don't know if I'd go
13 that far but no, I, I... it... in all seriousness I, I
14 think alternate solutions to this could be... could be
15 looked at and I would certainly entertain them.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: I, I think as we,
17 we... as, as we... just in the short time that I've been
18 Chair we've dealt with this issue twice and it just
19 seems to, to potentially not go away as it happened
20 many times before that. With respect to Hudson Yards
21 we had a, a Committee hearing a few months ago on a
22 different potential project and one that didn't go
23 quiet as well as Hudson Yards in Long Island City but
24 a lot of the things that were, were discussed, the
25 need for additional services also held true for

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 Hudson Yards, is there... is there... you know what is
3 the status of adding resources to that neighborhood
4 as it's on the verge of opening next week?

5 DANIEL NIGRO: Well we are in the process
6 and we've been in the process for quite some time of
7 trying to identify a location in the Hudson Yards
8 area in which we could house department resources
9 whether they're fire or EMS resources. We have... we
10 don't have any right now, we, we can add units such
11 as rapid response units. We anticipate that with the
12 opening of Hudson Yards based on the occupancies and
13 based on the construction that we will not have a
14 serious uptick in fire calls but we will have an
15 uptick of some degree of emergencies and medical
16 calls and we're looking on how to address that uptick
17 without having the ability to house additional units
18 in the Hudson area... Yards area of... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: But, but an engine
20 would still respond to that though?

21 DANIEL NIGRO: The units that are there
22 would continue to respond to those... to the calls in
23 that area, yes.

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And are the, the
3 units in the battalion in that area right now will
4 they be considered a... busier engine companies?

5 DANIEL NIGRO: I think our, our... many of
6 our units in Manhattan are quite busy right now and
7 may become slightly busier and we'll, we'll carefully
8 monitor that, but we'll see, we do not anticipate a
9 large increase in fires in the Hudson Yards area, no.

10 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And, and last year
11 we, we spoke about siting an ambulance... an ambulance
12 station there, has, has there been any development, I
13 mean what, what has occurred I guess from that moment
14 last year to this moment this year as far as finding
15 a, a location?

16 DANIEL NIGRO: Well we have found a few
17 locations, one of them didn't work out, I think... I
18 think right now we have a potential location, but
19 it'll be quite a while before we're able to occupy
20 that location.

21 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Is it... is it city
22 owned, or would it have to go through ULURP, or could
23 it be rented?

24

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 DANIEL NIGRO: I... do we know James, I'm,
3 I'm not certain on that, I, I don't think its city
4 owned though.

5 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay. I know
6 Council Member Ampry-Samuel has a... some questions.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Good
8 morning everyone. So, I'm very glad of course to hear
9 in the testimony the increase in female firefighters
10 obviously, historic numbers and as one of 11 women on
11 the Council that makes me smile even though we have a
12 long way to go. My question is related to the toilet
13 upgrades. So, the preliminary capital commitment plan
14 includes 2.6 million in fiscal 2019 to upgrade
15 toilets for female firefighters at engine company 24,
16 how many engine ladder companies are in need of
17 female firefighter toilet upgrades currently?

18 LAURA KAVANAGH: Every single house has a
19 facility of some kind, the additional money that you
20 see allocated is in some cases we installed a
21 facility that we then wanted to upgrade or change as
22 part of a renovation to the house so there is a
23 facility of some kind everywhere but we're looking to
24 upgrade those facilities as time goes on.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Can you
3 just kind of describe like when you just said that
4 facilities of some kind, I've heard just complaints
5 in the past about what that could possibly look like
6 so is it something that's a... like a totally separate
7 area or is it something that you have like a sign on
8 a door or can you just explain... [cross-talk]

9 LAURA KAVANAGH: In every... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: ...what that
11 is... [cross-talk]

12 LAURA KAVANAGH: ...case it is meant to be
13 a completely separate area but in some houses, you
14 know due to the age or the size of the fire house it
15 might have been very small what we were initially
16 able to accommodate and we seek to make that larger
17 or have a larger changing area so the additional
18 money you see is to accomplish that as to make every
19 facility is, is complete as it should be.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, what's
21 the like percentage now of completion?

22 LAURA KAVANAGH: Well 100 percent of them
23 as I said do have a facility of some... [cross-talk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Uh-huh...
25 [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 LAURA KAVANAGH: ...kind in them, yeah.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay and...

4 [cross-talk]

5 LAURA KAVANAGH: I could get you... I don't
6 have it here, I could get you which houses we're
7 looking at increasing the size of that facility or
8 making additional renovations to it.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay,
10 please do just so we can know like how we can be
11 supportive and they.. the same question as well with
12 EMS, are all EMS stations properly equipped with
13 toilets and or locker rooms for the female in.. EMTs
14 and paramedics and how many EMS stations are in need
15 of female toilet and or locker room upgrades?

16 JAMES BOOTH: To my knowledge ma'am all
17 of the ambulance stations are adequately prepared for
18 our female staffers.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: All?

20 JAMES BOOTH: Yes ma'am, all, all.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Okay,
22 alright. And I just want to add that rescue two is in
23 the middle of my district and it literally is around
24 the corner from my home and when I stand in front of
25 my house I can see the back yard of it and I am very...

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 and the community is very excited about it's
3 completion so we look forward to it.

4 DANIEL NIGRO: I'm sure they'll be good
5 neighbors and as for your question with our EMS
6 facilities, some of them are somewhat overtaxed size
7 wise and we're always looking to expand and to
8 improve conditions for, for our folks where possible
9 but everyone has... there are no facilities without
10 female locker rooms, without female bathrooms, they
11 all have them but like many of our fire houses some
12 of them can use an upgrade or modernization.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay, thank
14 you and what are the plans for the old rescue two
15 building on Bergen and... the old building?

16 DANIEL NIGRO: Well there are many
17 thoughts but nothing firm yet as to what will become
18 of that fire house.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay,
20 alright, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you Council
22 Member, just, just a question about equipment, you
23 didn't really touch on this in the... in your
24 statement, is there any new equipment that's being
25 purchased for personnel? We had some discussions last

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 week about EMS worker safety and then of course FDNY
3 firefighter safety, is there any new equipment being
4 funded in this year's budget?

5 JAMES BOOTH: We are purchasing new fire
6 hose, there's an upgraded fire hose model that we're
7 purchasing so that's one of the items.

8 DANIEL NIGRO: I mean we constantly
9 purchase new safety equipment for members not...
10 replacement equipment I should say, no new
11 technology. We've recently replaced all of our
12 portable radios, thermal imaging cameras, new
13 thermal... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: This, this... [cross-
15 talk]

16 DANIEL NIGRO: ...imaging cameras and such...
17 [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: ...question came up
19 in the... in the hearing and I, I... it, it didn't sound
20 like there was a good answer for it, is there a
21 reason why EMS has to carry a, a shoulder strapped
22 radio as opposed to a belt clipped radio?

23 JAMES BOOTH: Yes, there is... [cross-talk]

24 DANIEL NIGRO: Yeah... [cross-talk]

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 JAMES BOOTH: ...or the, the reason behind
3 the strap is we need a place to co-locate the carbon
4 monoxide detector which has to be up around your
5 breathing area as per OSHA regulations, it's also a
6 place to anchor the remote microphone which gives
7 increased availability to hear, understand, get
8 instructions, declare an emergency, hit the emergency
9 alert beacon and the strap provides the radio to go
10 on and go off easily when they need to dress in their
11 protective equipment in an emergency situation.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: What is the process
13 overall with respect to private ambulances, again
14 this has come up in the past and I know we're adding
15 new, new ambulance tours to address this but what is
16 the process for, for the new tours when a hospital
17 system or provider goes bankrupt or, or chooses to
18 stop?

19 JAMES BOOTH: The process is that we
20 evaluate the area in which the entity is served, we
21 look and see if we can cover the area with our
22 existing resources by redistribution of either the
23 fire department or voluntary hospital resources and
24 if we cannot do that we usually run the unit at risk

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 of... fire department unit at risk and we request
3 additional resources from the city.

4 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, with respect
5 to, to 33B, it was taken over by the fire department
6 and then last month it was given back to a, a
7 nonprofit provider or a hospital system or...

8 JAMES BOOTH: 33 Bowne in South Brooklyn,
9 yes, the Fire Department redistributed their members
10 to staff units, and it was a, a unit that was
11 temporarily reassigned back to the voluntary sector.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And how, how do we
13 evaluate the voluntary provider to... if, if it wasn't
14 profitable for company X why do we think it's
15 profitable for company B?

16 JAMES BOOTH: I don't understand... I, I
17 don't know why they make business decisions when
18 it's, it's a return on investment that's the
19 hospital's decision or the private company's decision
20 to participate in a system, what the Fire Department
21 looks at is in service time, it looks at
22 availability, it looks at overall performance of the
23 provider to see if they will continue in our system,
24 we reevaluate their agreement every two years.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: How, how much would
3 it cost to put a third EMS station on Staten Island,
4 is there an estimate for that?

5 STEPHEN RUSH: I think the cost for an
6 EMS station has been running about 20 million.

7 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Do we need an EMS
8 third station on Staten Island?

9 JAMES BOOTH: I would say that we would
10 reassess the needs of Staten Island and we would make
11 a determination from there sir.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: But like a good
13 determination, right?

14 JAMES BOOTH: For you sir.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you. Twenty
16 million is that all expense or is it all capital or
17 is it mixed... [cross-talk]

18 STEPHEN RUSH: It's capital... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: ...bag... thanks.

20 Council Member Brannan I know you had some questions.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Thank you Chair.

22 Commissioner I always am a broken record but I'm
23 going to be until we get it done, the fifth man is
24 super important to me and my constituents, I hear
25 about it all the time, would love to see a day where

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 we restore the fifth man to all 198 engine companies,
3 is that anywhere on the radar as far as negotiations
4 or is it a priority at all?

5 DANIEL NIGRO: Well I think I'm on record
6 as saying five is always better than four, but you
7 know the department has been successfully operating
8 with four firefighter engines for many years. It is
9 not currently on our radar or on our request list,
10 there are many things the department needs having a
11 fifth firefighter in every engine company would not
12 be the highest of, of those needs in my estimation
13 right now.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: What, what is
15 some of the things that come before it?

16 DANIEL NIGRO: Well I think additional
17 units would be more important, additional EMS
18 personnel would be more important right now to answer
19 the calls than, than the cost that we would incur by
20 adding the fifth firefighter every.. to every unit.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: And then putting
22 on my contract's hat, has the, the department done
23 more to prioritize contracting with MWBEs and is
24 there any progress there?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 DANIEL NIGRO: I think we've made great
3 progress with that and we have I think maybe Steve
4 could, could give you some, some numbers but we have
5 made that a, a very important issue for us.

6 STEPHEN RUSH: And in terms of small
7 purchasing we're probably at about 30 percent of our
8 purchases of MW... MWBEs and this year alone we were
9 award... re-awarded two multimillion-dollar contractor...
10 contracts to large scale vendors, one for
11 construction and one for temporary services that are
12 now in place so do... we're doing quite well this year.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay and has it
14 been a, a... you know a concerted effort to, to
15 prioritize... to focus on the... [cross-talk]

16 JOSEPH: We have a dedicated staff that
17 works on this, we get constant reminders to units, we
18 meet with the Mayor's Office to review our targets on
19 a... on a quarterly basis so this is high on our radar.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BRANNAN: Okay, thank you,
21 thank you Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you. so, the,
23 the Mayor announced the city's going to launch NYC
24 Care which, which is a program to guarantee health
25 care for New Yorkers including 600,000 without

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 insurance and as we understand it, it will be funded
3 through Metro Plus or through Direct Care through
4 Health and Hospitals, is, is there any thought that
5 this would also impact your ability to recover costs
6 for EMS services?

7 STEPHEN RUSH: Certainly if there's the
8 population right now of uninsured that we service is...
9 runs pretty historically around 20 percent that we're
10 not able to collect from because they really don't
11 have the means to pay so any type of insurance
12 whether it be through the affordable care act that
13 can improve those numbers or the Mayor's plan would,
14 would definitely help our revenue numbers as well.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, so have they
16 sort of advised you that now you'd be eligible
17 through Metro Plus to recover some of the money?

18 STEPHEN RUSH: Once a patient does
19 identify with insurance when we bill them then we
20 would bill the insurer and we'd receive payment from
21 them but we, we have no details as of yet.

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Going to civilian
23 overtime for a second, I don't know who came up with
24 this buzz word but maybe, maybe you did, I don't know
25 if you did but the department right sized the uniform

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 budget, I'm not sure what that means exactly but the
3 civilian overtime has not been right sized yet so, I,
4 I guess the question is why is civilian overtime
5 climbing so steadily?

6 STEPHEN RUSH: There's two aspects when I
7 think when you're talking about civilian overtime and
8 it's... maybe gets confusing with EMS it's... you know in
9 terms of how the city categorizes them or in the
10 civilian budget and EMS overtime is running quite
11 high right now and that's largely due to the
12 vacancies we have.

13 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: I got a dictionary
14 definition of right sized, I was just giving it,
15 thank you. Is there any talk about reclassifying EMS
16 as a uniform service?

17 DANIEL NIGRO: That is a collective
18 bargaining related issue.

19 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Would the
20 department support it if it was?

21 DANIEL NIGRO: There's no reason why we
22 wouldn't but again it has... it's a negotiated issue.

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: It, it... would
24 overtime be reduced if there were more EMS employees?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 DANIEL NIGRO: Sure, and we're hiring I
3 guess as much as our capacity allows at training.

4 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Is, is there
5 anything to be done to incentivize the longevity of
6 EMS employees, pay increases, again I understand
7 that's contractual but is it the department's
8 position that a pay increase for EMS or step pay
9 increase let's say would lead to better longevity
10 amongst the employees?

11 DANIEL NIGRO: I'm sure it could.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: That's a good
13 answer short and... let's just finally circle back
14 around to some diversity, can you just give us an
15 update on the diversity efforts for firefighters, I
16 know we're, we're still a little far away from seeing
17 the, the results but what, what has happened, any,
18 anything different this year, last year or have we
19 expanded or, or anything?

20 DANIEL NIGRO: Well the department
21 continues to grow to become more diverse, the list
22 that we will begin using with our next class, the
23 open competitive list is the most diverse list I
24 think that's been... we've had in our history so we

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 anticipate that the diversity of the department will
3 of course continue to grow in the right direction.

4 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: You know it was
5 tough to avoid seeing a newspaper article about the
6 spit hoods and I know we, we had to... you know we, we
7 had made e, a joke about it last month but then some
8 folks later testified that there was a delay due to
9 the coloring of the hood, can, can you just sort of
10 answer whether that was true... [cross-talk]

11 DANIEL NIGRO: Sure... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: ...whether if the
13 coloring delayed it by any chance?

14 DANIEL NIGRO: I think originally a, a
15 few years ago the medical equipment committee which
16 includes representatives of both the EMS unions when
17 evaluating whether the department should purchase
18 these hoods and should they be white or black decided
19 that that would be detrimental to the patients we
20 serve we have now found a vendor for a neutral color,
21 spit hood which we are in the process of purchasing
22 which will have... in those limited cases where these
23 can be effective because understand that we don't use
24 them on each person we, we treat that would be rather
25 strange so in those cases where someone is restrained

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 and, and this could benefit our members we will begin
3 using them as soon as we receive them.

4 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay. Council
5 Member Ampry-Samuel.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thanks
7 again you're your testimony you just talked about in
8 the beginning just different response times like you
9 responded to over 1.7 million incidents and 1.4 were
10 medical calls, is there a way for you to provide us
11 with information related to response time for
12 elevator calls like if an elevator... if you... if FDNY
13 has to respond to a stalled elevator do you at all
14 track that at all?

15 DANIEL NIGRO: We do break down all of
16 our calls as to what the nature of the call was, I
17 think we could do some... we can tell you what our
18 response time is to non-fire, non-medical
19 emergencies, we'd have to do a little more digging to
20 then divide that category up which includes many
21 other types of emergencies and find out but it... we
22 would respond to an elevator emergency in the same
23 manner we respond to any other serious emergency and
24 I would think our response times for our fire units
25 would be quite good for elevator emergencies. It also

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 depends on when... in some cases if no one is on the
3 elevator with a... with a phone able to contact us
4 there can be a delay in notification until somebody
5 notices that there's a stuck elevator but we respond
6 promptly to those types of calls.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Uh-huh, the
8 reason I asked that question is I, I know that you
9 respond promptly to the calls and, and I happen to
10 Chair the Public Housing Committee and there's always
11 fire fighters in a lot of our public housing
12 buildings and so it was just interesting just to kind
13 of figure out if there's an increase in FDNY having
14 to respond to stalled elevators or broken elevators
15 and what that actually looks like and the impact that
16 would have on your budget and responding to other
17 things if our many city elevators were actually
18 working and prepared so that was the reason why I
19 asked that question just to get a sense if this is
20 something that's being tracked because we're starting
21 to see an increase in...

22 DANIEL NIGRO: I'm sure we can break down
23 those numbers for you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay, thank
25 you.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And, and the last
3 thing I think to talk about perhaps is the EEO hires.
4 So, we saw 290,000 dollars added for three positions,
5 what is the... what is the current overall number of
6 cases the EEO office handles in a year?

7 DANIEL NIGRO: I don't have that number
8 with me, I don't know if any of us at this table do
9 but we certainly... I certainly have that number and we
10 can get it to you Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay, I mean we
12 certainly would like that, I mean just given the fact
13 that there, there is a PEG and we're adding... we're
14 adding employees to a particular office I just... it
15 would make sense to just see... [cross-talk]

16 DANIEL NIGRO: I think there has been an
17 increase not because there's been in... we, we don't
18 believe there's been an increase in the number of
19 incidents but because of the... of the increased
20 education in the department and informing people of
21 their rights to use the EEO office and the need to
22 use it when, when they should and we've had a
23 positive outcome in that way so I do believe that the
24 number of people using... inquiring of our EEO office
25 has gone up.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And do you know
3 roughly how long it takes for an investigation to
4 work its way through and, and, and sort of how often
5 it results in any, any sort of disciplinary action
6 whether it be just a reprimand or, or something more
7 serious?

8 DANIEL NIGRO: I think we do have a
9 target and we have improved the... I would say it's 90
10 days is, is our target to complete any EEO
11 investigation, some of them are more difficult than
12 others and require many more interviews than others
13 but the length of time from the inception of the
14 investigation to the completion has gone down
15 substantially in the past few years.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And, and what
17 really will be the final question because I was
18 looking for this information before and then I
19 finally got the text from staff. So, it... are we... are
20 we understanding right that 40B and 38W EMS tours
21 were, were given to NYU?

22 JAMES BOOTH: In Brooklyn you're talking
23 about?

24 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Correct.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 JAMES BOOTH: I would have to look at
3 those units specifically but if you're talking about
4 South Brooklyn those are South Brooklyn radio
5 designations... [cross-talk]

6 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay... [cross-talk]

7 JAMES BOOTH: ...I'd have to look at that
8 for you.

9 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: What, what would be
10 sort of the justification for going from FDNY EMS to
11 a hospital, were, were they... were they always
12 associated with the hospital, would, would you know?

13 JAMES BOOTH: I don't know if those radio
14 designations were always associated with the
15 hospital, I know what we do is we look at our current
16 staffing model and we look at what we can redeploy
17 into other areas of the city to maintain the service
18 level and we look to our voluntary providers to help
19 us every now and then get over the, the hill and keep
20 the service in the community at an optimal level.

21 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Are, are there
22 voluntary services whether they're hospitals or
23 anyone else actively looking to take over tours?

24 JAMES BOOTH: Not that I'm aware of at
25 the moment sir.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, it's not... it's
3 not something regular that happens where a, a tour at
4 a station or a unit would be put back to a voluntary?

5 JAMES BOOTH: We try not to make a habit
6 of it sir, it's more the opposite the Fire Department
7 is more in control of the system than the voluntary
8 sector.

9 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Is it... is it better
10 for the FDNY EMS to respond to a scene so that
11 they're better coordinated with all other first
12 responders or is it better for a voluntary to
13 respond?

14 JAMES BOOTH: I think that any ambulance
15 that the Fire Department sends to an emergency is
16 well equipped and able to manage the emergency that
17 they're confronted with sir.

18 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay, thank you.
19 Any questions from you guys? No, thank you all, I
20 appreciate it. We'll give a, a two second break and
21 then we will have the first panel come up as soon as
22 everyone is clear. Okay, just a... just, just to be
23 clear the first panel will be the panel from OEM.
24 Places everyone, places, let's, let's at least look
25 good. While we're waiting, I'll note we are joined by

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 Council Member Cabrera who's wearing a nice... a nice
3 aquamarine or the blue... I mean what would you call
4 that color, teal maybe? It's a nice tie.

5 [off mic dialogue]

6 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Commissioner I'm
7 afraid we have to swear you and your team in, Andy
8 how are you, good to see you?

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Would you all please
10 raise your right hands? Do you swear or affirm to
11 tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the
12 truth in your testimony today and to respond honestly
13 to Council Member questions?

14 JOE ESPOSITO: I do.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: You may begin.

16 JOE ESPOSITO: Thank you. Good morning
17 Chairperson Borelli and members of the Committee on
18 Fire and Emergency Management. I'm Joe Esposito, the
19 Commissioner of New York City Emergency Management
20 and I'm happy to be here to talk about our fiscal
21 year 2020 budget. And I hope that my voice is as
22 soothing as Commissioner Borelli's was.

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Dually noted and,
24 and indeed it is.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 JOE ESPOSITO: Okay, great, thank you.

3 Alright, 2018 was a busy year, we activated emergency
4 management operations center 16 times for a total of
5 59 days. That includes eight winter weather events, a
6 building vacate due to structural collapse, boiler
7 outages at New York City Housing Authority facility,
8 hurricane Maria transitional housing assistance, a
9 heat activation, three flash floods and the Flatiron
10 Steam main explosion. During extreme weather events,
11 we had... we held citywide calls for elected officials
12 and continuously sent out notifications for localized
13 incidents and specific districts... in, in specific
14 districts. In 2018, we monitored 3,661 incidents and
15 sent out citywide incident coordinators to 797
16 events. We held or participated in 105 interagency
17 exercises to make sure our plans are understood and
18 necessary protocols for plans are ready to be
19 implemented as needed. Our Notify NYC sent out 2,116
20 messages in 2018, bringing totals to more than 12,400
21 messages since it's inception. The Notify NYC mobile
22 application currently has over 69,700 downloads, this
23 is in addition to growth in our traditional
24 subscribership puts it at over 742,200 registrants.
25 Notify NYC is also in the midst of a historic

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 expansion project to fulfill City Council legislation
3 requiring emergency messages to be issued in non-
4 English speakers in the seven... in seven of the most
5 commonly spoken languages in the city. However, in
6 order to further service New Yorkers, Notify NYC is
7 working to meet and exceed the June 2019 requirement
8 by issuing emergency messages in 12 languages.

9 Beginning in June, in addition to the existing
10 account customizations, users can identify their
11 preferred language at the point of registration. We
12 are proud to... and excited for this new development,
13 it's really going to bring messaging to a... another
14 level for the people that need it the most. Our
15 community outreach and engagement activities continue
16 to grow, and you have likely seen us in your
17 neighborhood at meetings, town halls, fairs, mobile
18 office hours and other community events. In total, we
19 participated in 943 Ready New York events with more
20 than 100,000 people attending and we distributed more
21 than 800,000 of our emergency planning guides. We
22 also launched two new preparedness videos focused on
23 people with disabilities and access and functional
24 needs. If you haven't seen them, I encourage you to
25 see them, they are really very well made, and they

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 really send the message home. We, we graduated six
3 new classes of CERT volunteers, volunteers who
4 continue to work along the city's employees to
5 prepare New Yorkers for emergencies as well as
6 provide services during disasters. We also thank
7 Council Members who have provided us with
8 discretionary funding to donate go bags to their
9 constituents. We recommend that other Council Members
10 consider doing the same as this is a tangible benefit
11 and is very... it's very helpful in the communities,
12 especially among the vulnerable and the senior
13 populations. We hosted a Disabilities and Access
14 Functional Needs Symposium in December, it was
15 attended by over 160 people representing
16 organizations that service this, this community. The
17 Community Preparedness program launched a new
18 training for community partners called the Community
19 Preparedness Boot Camp. The Boot Camp assists local
20 community networks with their emergency planning and,
21 and connects them with other, other, other city
22 resources. We also launched the Community
23 Preparedness Council, Council in September, this
24 meets three times a year and it's a forum for the
25 boot camp participants to discuss emergency planning

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 on a, a community level and other emergency
3 management topics. This is a way sort of people can
4 get together and find out what they're doing right or
5 they're doing wrong, and we can... how we can better,
6 better utilize this boot camp. We continue to look
7 ahead to find new ways to prepare the city and our
8 citizens for the next emergency. With that, let me
9 now provide a snapshot of our budget for next year.
10 Our projected total fiscal year... our projected total
11 fiscal 2020 city tax levy expense budget is 30.9
12 million dollars. We rely on our city tax levy expense
13 budget to support the majority of the agency's
14 administrative, technology and operational costs. The
15 projected fiscal year 2020 personnel services budget
16 is 7.1 million dollars, this supports the 66
17 personnel lines paid directly through our tax levy
18 funds. This includes 1.6 million dollars in funding
19 for 18 staff members dedicated to working on
20 increasing communications and services to people with
21 access and functional needs. Our other staffing is
22 supported through the grant funds and personnel on
23 assignments from other city agencies, we have a
24 number of people in our emergency management who work
25 for other agencies and we find that very, very

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 helpful, it brings a nice communication and
3 connectivity to the other city agencies. Our
4 projected fiscal year 2020 other than personnel
5 service budget is 23.8 million dollars, which covers
6 all the agency's operating and administrative costs.
7 These funds are designated to cover our warehouse
8 lease, utilities, and telecommunication costs
9 including the maintenance and operations of our
10 emergency operations center and our back up
11 facilities. This money also supports our fleet and
12 all the additional equipment, supplies and material
13 needed to run the agency. The agency receives grant
14 funding to support many of our, our, our core
15 programs. In the past year, we've secured 25 million
16 dollars in federal funding, primarily through the
17 Urban Areas Security Initiative grant. This funding
18 is vital to our ability to run many of our finest
19 initiatives, including our Ready New York public
20 education program, our Community Emergency Response
21 Team program, our Continuity of Operations program,
22 the Geographic Information System, our Training and
23 Exercises, our Watch Command and Response, the
24 Citywide Incident Management System planning and the
25 Emergency Supply Stockpile. We work with City Hall,

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 OMB, the City's Congressional Delegation and other
3 partner agencies to push for full homeland security
4 funding in future years; this money supports critical
5 operations within ours and several other city
6 agencies' budgets and is critical to the city. Again,
7 we couldn't run emergency management without that...
8 without that federal funding. Thank you for the
9 opportunity to testify here today. I look forward to
10 continuing working with the Council on issues
11 pertaining to emergency preparedness and response and
12 I'm happy to take any questions.

13 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you very much
14 Commissioner, as always, your presence is welcome.
15 Were there any new needs that the agency requested
16 from OMB but was not included in the preliminary
17 budget?

18 JOE ESPOSITO: Yes, but nothing that
19 really effects the, the running of our, our shop day
20 to day, there's always things that we could... do more
21 if we had more funding but nothing that affects us
22 any... in any critical way. We're always asking for the
23 warehouse, for our office to be expanded things like
24 that but nothing that, that's critical to the
25 operation.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, more sprinkles
3 less cupcake?

4 JOE ESPOSITO: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Given the PEG and...
6 it seems that you're, you're getting cut 350,000
7 dollars, where, where is that going to come from?

8 JOE ESPOSITO: That will come from
9 delayed hiring, you know we lost some... we lose some...
10 every agency loses personnel so we're, we're delaying
11 some of our hiring and we think we can accomplish the
12 PEG by doing that.

13 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Is, is that a one
14 year or, or have you been told that that's going to
15 be baselined?

16 JOE ESPOSITO: Right now, information is
17 one... [cross-talk]

18 STACY ROSENFELD: One... [cross-talk]

19 JOE ESPOSITO: ...year.

20 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: With, with respect
21 to the folks that are... you... so, you know 66 employees
22 dedicated to OEM how many are on assignment from
23 other agencies roughly?

24 JOE ESPOSITO: Do you have a number?

25 [off mic dialogue]

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 JOE ESPOSITO: Probably 30... all... most of
3 ours are, are respondents the folks that go to the
4 jobs on the street they... the majority of them are
5 fire and police officers and there are 20 or 30 of
6 them, we have three or four building people, we have
7 some sanitation so it's, it's around 30, 35, I don't
8 have the exact number.

9 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Can you... can you
10 just take us through the... because I think those are
11 the people that the public might see earliest given
12 an emergency, can you just take us through their
13 function and what... and what services they're
14 providing on the scene?

15 JOE ESPOSITO: Sure, our CICs are the
16 folks that... they work 24 hours a day, seven days a
17 week, three different tours and what they'll do is
18 they'll go out to the scene of whatever incident
19 raises to our level of response, everything from
20 water main breaks, power outages, building collapses,
21 two alarm fires, there's... we have a protocol and
22 they'll go out and they'll respond and those are the
23 folks that will coordinate the incident right at the
24 location, they'll call the other agencies in, alright
25 PD what are you doing, fire what are you doing,

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 building what are... what do you need, what... the way I
3 consider it we're like the general contractor, you're
4 building a building you want to go out there, you
5 want to make sure the foundation is going in, you
6 want to make sure the electrician is doing what they
7 got to do they're not interfering with the plumber.
8 So, we, we coordinate the, the incident and we can
9 bring other resources there, we have the ability
10 through our watch command, we can call and say we
11 need the building department here, we need sanitation
12 because it's the, the, the water is freezing because
13 of the fire. So, we're general contractors for the
14 most part.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And is there any
16 metric to, to, to like to measure the effectiveness
17 of, of the program, I mean I, I, I personally think
18 it's a successful program, is, is there any like,
19 like data we can point to or is it just more or less...
20 I mean anecdotal which is fine if it is?

21 JOE ESPOSITO: Well we judge it by the
22 response we're getting from, from folks like you, we
23 get calls all the time from the Council of the city,
24 elected officials asking for our assistance and the
25 feedback we get is that our folks are doing a, a, a

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 pretty good job, I mean the, the Dyker, Dyker Heights
3 power outage we were at that, we handled that, you
4 know we get a lot of calls through, through other
5 city agencies to help them with incidents and the,
6 the feedback is positive, we've gotten a lot of
7 tremendous, positive feedback and that's what we
8 measure it off of, not from elected officials also.
9 We go out to community meetings, we're going to
10 community council meetings, we go to district service
11 council meetings and all the feedback we're getting
12 is very positive, we'll update them on, on jobs that
13 have been happening in their district, in their area
14 of concern and the positive... it's been very positive
15 the feedback.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Switching gears to,
17 to funding now. So, right now the preliminary budget
18 recognizes 48,000 in federal funding but the
19 preliminary budget from last year had 23 million,
20 now, now this is just the cyclical, the, the cycle of
21 the federal... the way federal funding hits the city..
22 [cross-talk]

23 JOE ESPOSITO: For our, our granting?

24 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Uh-huh.
25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 JOE ESPOSITO: No, we apply every year,
3 we apply every year and each... we get around 25
4 million each year that's what we need to, to run our
5 shop, if they were to cut us we might have to trim
6 some of the things we provide but right now we get 25
7 million every year and it's, it's really is, is a big
8 part of what we do. Stacy you want to...

9 STACY ROSENFELD: No... yeah, that's
10 absolutely correct and also, you're seeing a
11 snapshot, so we usually have three UASI grants in
12 play at one time, those aren't all three up for next
13 year. So, our, our funding will remain consistent
14 from year to year but if you look at the snapshot in
15 FMS it might show a different number.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Now is, is UASI
17 grants the only source of funding or are there other...
18 [cross-talk]

19 STACY ROSENFELD: It's not the only...
20 [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: ...smaller funds...
22 [cross-talk]

23 STACY ROSENFELD: ...but it's the primary.

24 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay... [cross-talk]

25 STACY ROSENFELD: ...federal source.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And are the other...
3 the, the other sources very line item specific for,
4 for a specific function or... [cross-talk]

5 STACY ROSENFELD: Well we get Urban
6 Search and Rescue grants which are very specific, we
7 also get the local emergency preparedness management
8 grant which is for emergency management functions,
9 it's more specific than you all see it's for the
10 operation center but... and those are... it's generally
11 for personnel.

12 JOE ESPOSITO: Yeah, roughly, roughly
13 it's 21 million on the UASI grant and the rest will
14 come in from other, other grants.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Just... one final
16 question [clears throat] excuse me... I got a little
17 cough. And NYC... Notify NYC has I think you said
18 750,000 people connected, do you integrate your data
19 with commercial apps for that like citizen app?

20 JOE ESPOSITO: We, we, we look at all the
21 information, Watch Command monitors everything that
22 comes in for the... [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: No, I mean... I mean
24 the opposite, whereas your information could go to
25 them, I think... I think they buy information.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 JOE ESPOSITO: Yeah, well look we, we
3 suggest that everyone sign up Notify NYC, anybody can
4 sign up, it's a free app and everybody can sign up so
5 if you're a company you can sign up and, and many
6 companies and services do sign up and they use us for
7 the baseline for their information.

8 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And, and from your
9 standpoint the more ways we disseminate the message
10 the, the better... [cross-talk]

11 JOE ESPOSITO: The more people that have
12 the information the better. We want every person that
13 works or lives in New York City to sign up for Notify
14 NYC.

15 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And I, I... either of
16 you folks have questions? Council Member Cabrera.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: In light of..
18 Commissioner it's good to see you... [cross-talk]

19 JOE ESPOSITO: Morning... [cross-talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...again. In light
21 of other news that we keep getting about global
22 warming and weather changing, is there anything that..
23 in terms of your strategy for this year you're
24 anticipating and, and is there any financial impact
25 related to it?

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 JOE ESPOSITO: We're involved with
3 something called the interim flood protection
4 measures and this is to try and help us prevent the
5 flooding that happens when you get a hurricane or a
6 big storm so we're as a matter of fact right here
7 working on the, the latest one is right here at the
8 Southbury Seaport, we're going to set up.. you may be
9 seeing around the city they're... they look like big,
10 big sand bags, they're four feet high sand bags,
11 there's some tiger dams that we do, we're in... we're
12 trying to install them in as many places as possible
13 to keep the water from impacting us during a storm
14 and that's a multimillion dollar project that we're
15 doing year to year, we started.. City Hall put us in
16 charge of it a few years ago and that's been going
17 on, you know day after day, we're doing Staten
18 Island, we've got Red Hook, we've done the Bronx,
19 Manhattan, Brooklyn all... just about all five boroughs
20 have got some type of this program in place.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And what would
22 you say are some of the most unprotected... [cross-
23 talk]

24 JOE ESPOSITO: The what?

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Most unprotected
3 Council District in terms if we were to have a
4 hurricane again like Sandy, I remember being... [cross-
5 talk]

6 JOE ESPOSITO: Well... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...in the
8 Rockaways, you know... [cross-talk]

9 JOE ESPOSITO: Yeah... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...watery... I was...
11 [cross-talk]

12 JOE ESPOSITO: Well that would depend...
13 [cross-talk]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...there helping
15 somebody else... [cross-talk]

16 JOE ESPOSITO: ...on, on, on the storm
17 that's coming in, depending on the direction, now
18 Sandy originally we thought it was going to hit the
19 Bronx, it, it changed at the... you know before it hit
20 and it hit the shore area of Staten Island, Rockaway
21 so it really depends on the storm that's coming in,
22 what direction its coming in from but for the most
23 part it's your coastal areas and that's what we're
24 concentrating on we're concentrating on the coastal
25 areas... [cross-talk]

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: But is there a
3 particular area that we have not done work, another
4 words some... there are... the U.S. Army engineers...

5 [cross-talk]

6 JOE ESPOSITO: Corps of Engineers...

7 [cross-talk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...came in and
9 did some work and you know to, to better be able to
10 handle, you know surge, are there... are there areas
11 that you would say hey we should be mindful of?

12 JOE ESPOSITO: Oh, with, without a doubt,
13 the... we have not protected the entire city, it's
14 just... it's just an ongoing process that we've got to
15 do day in and day out so if, if, if a hurricane were
16 to come or a superstorm like Sandy would come again
17 we would have our issues but I think we're, we're
18 better prepared now than we, we ever have been, some
19 of the areas that got flooded would not flood because
20 of some of the measures we've done but again it's an
21 ongoing process. There are still areas of the city
22 that are still unprotected.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Well thank you
24 Commissioner and I really appreciate all the work
25 that you do, you're one of the best.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 JOE ESPOSITO: Thank you so much.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you and we're
5 also joined by Council Member Maisel who rounds out
6 the, the Committee so perfect attendance for all of
7 us, great. Justin do you have questions? No, I, I
8 guess the, the question that the public wants to know
9 is, is in an emergency how quickly will we resort to
10 cannibalism given the supplies that you maintain for
11 us?

12 JOE ESPOSITO: Have you been watching the
13 Walking Dead is that why I'm getting that question?

14 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Lost... I'm thinking
15 more Lost, you know.

16 JOE ESPOSITO: Okay. No, we'll never have
17 that issue, no, we have a warehouse, we have three
18 warehouses, we could supply 70,000 people for seven
19 days with many of the necessary things they would
20 need so I think cannibalism is, is a long way off.

21 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay, thank you,
22 very comforting.

23 JOE ESPOSITO: Okay...

24 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: I thank you
25 Commissioner, thank you folks, I appreciate it.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 JOE ESPOSITO: Alright, thank you.

3 [off mic dialogue]

4 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Yeah, we'll take a,
5 a one-minute break and then we'll get the next panel
6 up and the next panel will be. Yep, Vincent Variale;
7 Oren; Michael and then we'll, we'll do another panel.
8 Is Oren on twice? Okay. Gentlemen it's nice seeing
9 you guys.

10 MICHAEL GRECO: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: As usual who wants
12 to start? Oren please. Oren please begin...

13 OREN BARZILAY: Good morning, good
14 morning to all the Council Members. Thank you for
15 giving us the opportunity to speak today. My name is
16 Oren Barzilay, President of FDNY EMS Local 2507,
17 Uniformed EMTs, Paramedics and Fire Inspectors. As we
18 all... we are all aware Congress failed to rescind
19 disproportionate share hospital payment cuts that
20 became effective on October 1st, thereby reducing the
21 critical federal funding that reimburses hospitals
22 through the Medical program... through the Medicaid
23 program for uncompensated health care costs. These
24 cuts will decimate New York's hospitals and fall
25 hardest on its public and safety net, net hospitals

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 that are already strained and serve the neediest
3 patient populations. EMS... even now EMS budgets are
4 razor thin across the state. As a result of the White
5 House Administration budget cuts New York's proposed
6 2019 budget would require further cuts in services.

7 As part of the revision to the health and mental
8 hygiene bill, S.1507, A.2007, the proposal will
9 eliminate Medicaid payments for low income and
10 elderly patients insured by both Medicaid and
11 Medicare, a decision that could cost all EMS agencies
12 statewide an estimated total cost of 14 million per
13 year. Additionally, a 2017 New York State Department
14 of Health report showed ambulance providers are
15 already substantially short changed by Medicaid and
16 recommended rate increases of 31 million in 2017.

17 This financial Armageddon is not a stand-alone issue.
18 Increasing call volume, a growing population and a
19 shrinking department budget will spell trouble for a
20 system already under back breaking stress. The EMS
21 providers... the EMS providers handle 80 percent of the
22 call volume with just 14 percent of the Fire
23 Department's budget. It is becoming imperative that
24 the budget be aligned with the reality of the
25 situation we are facing. Any budget reduction to the

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 emergency medical service will result in a loss of
3 ambulance shifts on a daily basis, which when... which
4 when coupled with the current staffing issues will
5 result in a response that creeps up to unacceptable
6 levels. There have been recent articles in the past
7 two days, few weeks showing ambulance services
8 companies across the state shutting down due to
9 Medicaid reimbursements. It is only a matter of time
10 before it hits New York City. The Commissioner's
11 testimony, which we are grateful for him has been the
12 very supportive to the EMS force but as he stated, 25
13 percent increase in EMS calls nationwide. A... fire
14 department records show that in 2017 we had 1.8
15 million calls, in 2018 we're at 1.9 million calls, we
16 are constantly breaking records. At the pace we're
17 going we're going to hit two million calls this year,
18 that's unheard of, two million EMS runs. While we are
19 grateful, they are doing construction to two EMS
20 facilities and expanding them, there is no mention of
21 any new facilities. In the proposal merger... in the
22 merger proposal rather which we can provide the
23 Council there is a mention of 70 EMS stations, we
24 haven't grown in years, we're still busting at the
25 seams. I'm grateful that the Commissioner will

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 support us being recognized as a uniformed service,
3 but the law is already in place, the problem is the
4 Mayor is refusing to do something. They have no
5 answers for 33 Bowne, 38 William and 40 Bowne, the
6 fact is they're giving those units away because they
7 can't keep up with the staffing issue. The call
8 volume is increasing, our lines.. our lines are
9 decreasing. Rather than the FDNY taking over serving
10 these communities they're giving them away. With this
11 New York State budget cuts as in past history, we've
12 had communities left unattended when they one night
13 decided to fold up and not give any notification to
14 the FDNY leaving us the infused paramedics of the
15 city of New York and many offices stranded and
16 scrambling to cover these shifts to protect and serve
17 the public. There were questions about the lockers,
18 we still have a problem with lockers. Their solution
19 was let's cut these lockers in half, replace them and
20 cut their space. We have no room for our equipment,
21 with half sizing these lockers they want us to leave
22 our equipment hanging on the floor, put boots on top
23 of the lockers that are soiled with whatever they're
24 contaminated with. Hudson Yards, I'm not sure where
25 they're going to get these resources, our members are

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 already giving all they have, how much overtime can
3 they do? This issue is not going away, our staffing
4 is critical.

5 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: I just want to ask
6 you a question.

7 OREN BARZILAY: Okay.

8 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Can you just go
9 over those, those numbers again on the calls, you
10 said there was 1.8 million in 2017 and 1.9 million
11 last year and now we're on pace for two million...

12 [cross-talk]

13 OREN BARZILAY: Two million calls.

14 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Is that the first
15 time in, in the city's history we'll hit two million?

16 OREN BARZILAY: First time ever.

17 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And just to add my
18 own commentary, I mean I think it's very rare and it
19 highlights the problem a great deal when you have a
20 union saying that there's actually too much overtime
21 for their members, I mean this is... this is something
22 that just... I mean it, it is almost comical, I mean
23 it... I mean and just to... just to demonstrate how much
24 stress is placed on, on members and how much they

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 have to work so with that I will just give it up for,
3 for Vincent.

4 VINCENT VARIALE: Thank you, I'll just
5 add to that other jobs because everybody in EMS has
6 two or three jobs, other jobs I've been to, you're
7 right, there will be... there'd be fights in the
8 hallways for about an hour... to get an hour or two
9 hours of overtime extra for the day and an EMS it's
10 the complete opposite, it's like you got overtime and
11 everybody is running the other direction because like
12 I've had enough already this week, I did 60 hours, 70
13 hours already, you know and they don't want the
14 overtime at that point, unfortunately we need to work
15 that overtime just to make a livable wage and that's,
16 that's a big problem. Well I guess now it's... yeah,
17 it's still morning, okay. So, good morning Chairman
18 Joseph Borelli and distinguished members of the City
19 Council. My name is Vincent Variale, I am President
20 of Local 3621, the Uniformed EMS Officers Union
21 representing over 500 EMS Lieutenants and Captains of
22 the New York City Fire Department Emergency Medical
23 Services Bureau. I thank you for the opportunity to
24 testify here today. The EMS Bureau of the FDNY has an
25 abundance of pilot programs and contingency plans to

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 address the many operational needs and emergency
3 scenarios. However, the ability to adequately
4 implement and operate these plans have a... have been
5 severely lacking. This year marks 23 years since the
6 EMS merger into the FDNY. The genuine concern
7 demonstrated by our Fire Commissioner Daniel Nigro
8 for the issues that would improve the quality of life
9 for EMS personnel and the services provided to the
10 people of the city are appreciated. However, many of
11 the issues that have negatively impacted the service
12 for years continue even today. When EMS worked on the
13 Health and Hospitals Corporation, we were poorly
14 compensated, severely understaffed, lacked an
15 adequate span of control ratio and required
16 additional stations throughout the city. These same
17 issues continue to plague EMS and the lack of
18 retention, currently at 60 percent with less than
19 three years' experience hinders our ability to
20 provide the best pre-hospital care for the people of
21 this city. Sometime after the merger the City Council
22 passed local laws 18 and 19 providing uniformed
23 status for members of the EMS workforce. The purpose
24 of this legislative accomplishment was to provide EMS
25 with the same level of support that it provided to

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 other emergency first responders and uniformed
3 services. Unfortunately, that objective was not
4 achieved and we're still fighting for that
5 recognition today and support. While campaigning for
6 a second term, Mayor De Blasio promised to address
7 the inequalities that exist and bring the people of
8 this city fairness and equality, those are his words.
9 I ask the members of this Committee and the entire
10 City Council to hold the Mayor to that promise and
11 provide EMS with the funding needed to address these
12 issues mentioned and deliver the fairness and
13 equality he promised. Thank you very much, I'm
14 available for any questions. One thing I would like,
15 like to mention further that was talked about in the
16 speech by the Commissioner, I know that there is
17 nothing in the budget even though they said they're
18 renovating facilities, there was nothing there to add
19 additional... you know more facilities for EMS, there
20 was nothing in there for compensation for members
21 like for example the fly car program was mentioned,
22 those members today are still working three jobs,
23 they're working as a Lieutenant, a paramedic and a
24 trainer, they're training their partner, the
25 paramedic that just got the job. They are still paid

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 the same amount of money, how is that fair or equal,
3 we are already overworked and as Oren stated we're
4 going to be hitting two million jobs so we're already
5 working... the horse is already pulling the wagon,
6 we're overheating and now we're added... given
7 additional workload and we're not being compensated
8 or being respected or treated fairly in any way to
9 address that workload.

10 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Taking the pay out
11 of it just quickly, is the fly car program
12 successful?

13 VINCENT VARIALE: They're say... they're
14 pointing that their success is getting the unit to an
15 airless call faster that it's happening however,
16 other things are faltering and that's the problem
17 it's like you're giving up some other stuff that are
18 important to, to achieve one goal; supervision, span
19 of control ratio is suffering from it so, is it
20 working? I don't know it depends if you're looking
21 narrowly in one area it might be according to their
22 numbers but overall it, it really... it needs... it's
23 like I state, stated in my testimony, there are... it's
24 a pilot program that isn't properly supported and it
25 is not... and compensation is a big deal with it

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 because let's face it, if an employee is angry going
3 to work how well do you think that job is going to be
4 done, they're going to do what they have to do
5 because they love EMS, they love the job, they're not
6 going to screw the people of the city over but, you
7 know when you're angry about something it doesn't...
8 it's not going to be the best productivity you're
9 going to get.

10 MICHAEL GRECO: Good afternoon, my name
11 is Michael Greco, I'm the Vice President of Local
12 2507. [clears throat] excuse me. I want to thank you
13 Chairperson and I want to thank the other Council
14 Members for listening to us. We have been here
15 before, I feel... I... sometimes I feel like a broken
16 record and I actually feel like I'm taking crazy
17 pills because it's a broken record that goes on and
18 on and on. You have a system that's about to do two
19 million calls, we are the biggest, largest EMS system
20 in the world, we are understaffed, underfunded,
21 underappreciated, I really do appreciate Commissioner
22 Nigro coming out and giving a very simple answer,
23 would pay help, yes, pay would help. We are paid
24 significantly less. I'm listening to the budget and
25 the money that is spent on equal opportunity

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 recruitment, I listened to the money that's being
3 spent for bathrooms for females on a fire side, a
4 historic level of 77 females. I just pulled up the
5 budget from last year that talked about the numbers,
6 in EMS the numbers, male versus female we had 3,400
7 males, we have 1,104 females, we have a diversity
8 makeup of 35 percent white females the rest would be
9 considered non-white, we are the most diverse group
10 of emergency responders and when you look at our pay,
11 when you look at what's going on, I just looked up a
12 Lieutenant, she's a friend of mine and she currently
13 is at 60 percent overtime, that is 2,000 hours and 60
14 percent on top of that, that's 1,200 hours of
15 overtime, her pay is 145,000, that sounds amazing.
16 That is almost 4,000 hours, she does not see her
17 kids, she does not see her husband, she lives here
18 five days a week and has to go to Pennsylvania for
19 the two days because that's where her house is
20 because she can't afford to be here, that is the
21 level that we are at right now. When you talk about
22 stations, we obviously need them. I had the, the
23 Councilwoman bring up rescue two, the new station in
24 your district, the question was, what is going on
25 with the old rescue two, did anybody think to maybe

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 renovate it a little bit and give it to us? It seems
3 like it's a city owned property, there's plenty of
4 things... they're, they're renovating a lot of things,
5 give us our stations, 70 stations we were promised 20
6 years ago... 23 years ago and we've gotten a couple and
7 our stations are not these beautiful rescue two
8 you're seeing outside your window, window, they are
9 trailers underneath the Triboro Bridge with pigeon
10 feces constantly going, we use bricks to cover our
11 cars with hospital sheets so every day we don't come
12 with 400 pigeon droppings on a car, that is what
13 they're supporting us with, 14 percent of the budget,
14 1.5 million calls. There is a diversity problem that
15 is glaring to everybody in our service, there is a
16 retention problem that's glaring to our service so if
17 they don't have the facility to hire more than 180
18 get me the facility to hire 320. There's... I don't see
19 that in the budget. The, the retention rate of our
20 salary is atrocious, it's amazing that we are giving
21 units away because we're having trouble hiring but we
22 have no problem bringing 1,200 people in a year and a
23 half, promoting to fire that class that they just so...
24 they, they got up here and, and they wanted to be
25 recognized for the amount of females, 15, that's

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 amazing, we... I, I want hundreds to be in the fire
3 service but those 15 females were EMS, they... fire...
4 FDNY did not gain females, FDNY moved 15 females, we
5 are civilian so therefore now they're uniformed so it
6 looks like they gained, they didn't gain one person,
7 they took from us and put it on dress of EEO
8 compliance. If you were to pay us the same let me see
9 how many of those people will go over, there's a
10 reason why we have 35 percent female, there's a
11 reason why we have over 1,000 because people love
12 doing this job and without this council's help
13 because I'm not sure if the fire department has the
14 ability to wave this wand, they can ask for things
15 but it is the budget, it is the Mayor and I'm being
16 very polite when I say please talk to him and make
17 him readdress the way he looks at us because despite
18 what he feels, despite of the recognition and the
19 support we get we have some of the greatest EMTs,
20 paramedics and officers that the world knows, it'd be
21 nice if somebody besides us looking at each other
22 recognize that. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, just to... just
24 to give you an update since our, our last hearing we
25 are looking at reintroducing the 2001 law with

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 respect to how the courts rule on it and seeing if
3 there's a new way to introduce it, our, our counsel
4 is not here today, he's going to be on paternity
5 leave for a couple of weeks so... but, but he's, he's
6 the smart one I'm just the... I'm just the good-looking
7 face but if... [cross-talk]

8 VINCENT VARIALE: Me and Oren have that
9 same problem.

10 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Exactly... [cross-
11 talk]

12 VINCENT VARIALE: We don't know who's the
13 good-looking face though... [cross-talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: So, you know... you
15 know... you know how it is so just... I, I'm hoping we
16 get some movement on it within the next... [cross-talk]

17 OREN BARZILAY: Thank you... [cross-talk]

18 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: ...few months...
19 [cross-talk]

20 MICHAEL GRECO: Thank you, that's great...
21 that's great news.

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Yeah...

23 MICHAEL GRECO: I would like to address
24 something that they said about the radio straps, our
25 Chief of EMS sat there and said it's an OSHA, I have

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 not found the OSHA compliance, they sell carbon
3 monoxide key chains, they have belt clips on them,
4 people in other services use this on their belt,
5 it's something they say, I have not seen the proof
6 that it needs to be at eye level or not, it is a
7 barely above... this is the science of it, it's barely
8 lighter than air which means it's almost neutral, it,
9 it disperses evenly throughout a room that's why
10 sometimes you see a carbon monoxide on a baseboard,
11 sometimes you see it on a ceiling, so you can have it
12 anywhere you want. It is a safety issue that is
13 currently under review in safety according to them so
14 to have it sit here and be like oh, it has to be as
15 per an OSHA requirement, it's, it's not.

16 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you guys...

17 [cross-talk]

18 OREN BARZILAY: Can I just... [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: ...we appreciate it...

20 [cross-talk]

21 OREN BARZILAY: ...add something to that...

22 [cross-talk]

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Oh, sorry, yes
24 please.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 OREN BARZILAY: Our, our uniformed,
3 uniforms are designed, there's a... there's a...

4 MICHAEL GRECO: A lapel... [cross-talk]

5 OREN BARZILAY: ...there's a strap that
6 allows you to put that meter or the radio to attach
7 it to it on your shirt...

8 VINCENT VARIALE: Many people hang their
9 radio mics on it...

10 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Right... [cross-talk]

11 VINCENT VARIALE: It's... I think it's
12 called epilate...

13 OREN BARZILAY: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

14 VINCENT VARIALE: ...and Oren's correct you
15 can put CO meter on there as well. Quite frankly the
16 radio strap is... my view for EMS it's a hazard, a
17 safety hazard because just like when we walk around
18 with the stethoscope I used to put my scope through
19 epilate because if you get caught by an EDP an
20 emotionally disturbed person who wants to strangle
21 you with it... [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Sure... [cross-talk]

23 VINCENT VARIALE: ...just like with the
24 strap you don't want them to be able to pull you with
25 it so having the radio strap actually could endanger

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 your life more than... and we've had issues where
3 members were grabbed by the radio belt. One in
4 particular was at the flash flood in Queens where two
5 EMTs were pulling somebody out of a car under a
6 bridge and the wiper blade caught onto the radio
7 strap...

8 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Well, I think... I
9 think Mike effectively argued this point at the last
10 hearing when he said you don't want to hit the
11 patients in the head with the radio, I think that's a
12 very... [cross-talk]

13 OREN BARZILAY: That's very... [cross-talk]

14 MICHAEL GRECO: That's a very good...
15 [cross-talk]

16 OREN BARZILAY: ...valid point... [cross-
17 talk]

18 MICHAEL GRECO: ...for all argument... and
19 one small thing, they issue us clip on ties for our
20 class A uniforms and our other uniforms because it's
21 a hazard to have a tie.

22 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Well thank you
23 guys, I appreciate it.

24 VINCENT VARIALE: Thank you very much.

25

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: And I, I think... is
3 she here? Nancy Carbone, did she leave? Okay, then
4 we'll just have Benjamin Chou and David Lin.
5 Gentlemen begin whenever you like.

6 DAVID LIN: Okay.

7 BENJAMIN CHOU: Good morning Committee
8 Chair, press the microphone, okay. Good morning
9 Committee Chair and distinguished Council Members. My
10 name is Benjamin Chou, I'm the Vice President of the
11 FDNY Phoenix Society, I'm a firefighter assigned to
12 engine company 298 in Jamaica, Queens.

13 DAVID LIN: My name is David Lin, I'm the
14 President of the FDNY Phoenix Society. I am the... I
15 work out of recruitment so...

16 BENJAMIN CHOU: We're from the FDNY
17 Phoenix Society, our objective... our objective is to
18 unite in the effort of promoting the interest and
19 welfare of the Fire Department personnel who are
20 Asian Americans or those of Asian descent. The FDNY
21 Phoenix Society seeks to enhance the Asian American
22 community and the New York City Fire Department by
23 networking amongst those interested in professional
24 and personal development, while emphasizing,
25 emphasizing the preservation of Asian American

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 identity. The society provides resources and guidance
3 that inspire, empower, develop and support
4 professionalism within the FDNY to become community-
5 oriented leaders. The FDNY Phoenix Society strives to
6 promote community relations, career growth,
7 leadership, networking, public service and most
8 importantly family oriented events.

9 DAVID LIN: So, the society from which
10 found, found about... since 2012 is recognized but
11 probably by the department 2013 spring. So... and
12 recently... so, we've been acknowledged for our
13 outstanding effort throughout the city. We, you know
14 we try to engage the, the Asian communities and
15 build... and it's a cultural bridge between us and the
16 fire department. We recently received 13,500 dollars
17 in discretionary funding from Council Member Peter
18 Koo and Margaret Chin for our initiative in the
19 recruitment process so that money is being used to..
20 for career enhancement to train new incoming fire
21 fighter candidates, EMS candidates and administrative
22 staff as well too. Overall, we want... what we want to
23 do is we want to let our community know that hey,
24 that public service is a great and admirable
25 position, position, it is a service that is, is a

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 give back to the community and we want to... we want to
3 increase more members in the department. Recently for
4 this year we asked for additional resources of 35,000
5 dollars through discretionary funding so one of the
6 things that we've been working with the department
7 and the foundation is their language class and
8 Benjamin can talk more about that.

9 BENJAMIN CHOU: We hold our language
10 class bi-annually at Flushing High School, we do... we
11 open the language class to every member within the
12 department so it's our way of giving back to the
13 department a little bit and we teach free Mandarin
14 language classes, we have a professional teacher come
15 in every Tuesday.

16 DAVID LIN: The primary reason for
17 language class is when, when first responders respond
18 into patient care and with the Asian community grow...
19 continue growing throughout Queens, Brooklyn and
20 throughout the city we want to... we want to reduce
21 patient care response time, basic information such as
22 say... why did you call... why did you call 9-1-1, you
23 know what, what, what... you know what is your pain
24 level, basic stuff like that just so we can
25 communicate with the members and this is actually

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
2 being funded by the... by the FDNY foundation, 7,500
3 dollars was given for this current fiscal year and
4 we're currently on our second term right now. Class
5 is being held at Flushing High School, all department
6 personnel attends whether they are fire marshal, fire
7 fighters, EMS and administrative staff personnel that
8 includes attorneys as well. So, though... so, there are
9 three major areas that we would like to continue
10 working with the department to enhance our effort.
11 One of them is continue recruitment efforts in the
12 Asian community and these positions are firefighter,
13 EMS, fire prevention and administrative staff
14 support. One of the key areas that the department
15 uses are firefighter mobile academy and EMS mobile
16 academy. What those are, are... they are engagement
17 events with current test takers and future applicants
18 as well too and Ben can talk a little more about the...
19 [cross-talk]

20 BENJAMIN CHOU: Yes, I've... [cross-talk]

21 DAVID LIN: ...firefighter... [cross-talk]

22 BENJAMIN CHOU: ...worked with the mobile
23 academy before with community affairs, something that
24 we use... we see... we have seen it to be helpful within
25 the community especially for something that's foreign

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 in our culture is Asian culture is the fire
3 department. It's a hands on experience for young
4 adults and members of the community to see what we do
5 and what, what the job would be... anticipate I guess
6 what to, to expect from the job and... especially if
7 they're candidates trying to get into the job so I
8 feel that it is something that... it's something that's
9 important that we continue within the community to
10 show... to show familiarity...

11 DAVID LIN: So, in these events, so for
12 example for fire mobile academy applicants in Canada
13 they are being given bunker gears they're trying it
14 on, they can actually envision themselves what is it
15 like to be in a uniformed position and you know for
16 the very first time you put it on... a helmet on and,
17 and bunker pants on it's a great sensation over
18 there, you envision yourself being in this position
19 now you can actually see it by wearing the equipment
20 and there's PT given as well too such as simple stuff
21 like hose drag, pushups, burpees and there's also
22 given... so, that's for the firefighter. EMS has the
23 same thing as well so where... there's EMS... fire... EMS
24 mobile academy and there you're given patient care,
25 you're teaching the individual hey, what's it like to

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 assess a patient, you put BSI on, which pair of
3 gloves... your gloves on and you're taking a pulse,
4 you're taking the blood pressure, you're asking the
5 individual hey, you know are you hurt, you do a
6 little role play situation and can... applicants are
7 also shown the MERV unit, you know basically it's a
8 emergency response vehicle and a lot of people have
9 never seen that before. So, it's exposure to fire
10 department careers and usually uniformed careers that
11 potentially we want... we can... we want to show our
12 communities so we can save lives. What we notice is
13 that there's a lack of firefighter mobile academy and
14 EMS academy within the Asian communities and we... how
15 can we... how can the department partner up with it,
16 the department is doing a great job so far right now
17 but we want the department to move forward in a
18 correct direction and continue that partnership and
19 you... the department can partner up with community..
20 with Board of Education, Community Boards and elected
21 official demographic areas because Council Members
22 here you have... you, your community represents the
23 demographic that department needs to continue
24 diversifying, you know we would like to see more
25 people that have the multilinguistic skill in

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 addition to the face and the other thing is we want
3 to... we want to continue... we want to start is we
4 noticed that nutrition is a big thing with our
5 candidates so we can tell our candidates go ahead and
6 study and go to PT class, you know go ahead and go
7 run and whatnot but without the proper tools such as
8 nutritional diet they don't know how to do this, how
9 many... like proper nutrition is like eating correctly,
10 fueling correctly, you know if you don't take care of
11 yourself in the inside then how, how can you perform
12 your job and that applies to not just firefighters
13 but for... also, also for the EMS because EMS are
14 constantly on the go and you're not eating correctly
15 you're... and what, what does this all lead into, it
16 leads into injuries, the long term injuries, it leads
17 to weight gain. The number one reason for, for
18 medical leave and even three quarter... three quarter
19 is actually cardiac so if you can tell someone hey,
20 how to eat correctly they can actually reduce, you
21 know long term medical, medical as well. So, I mean
22 that's one thing that we noticed the department
23 doesn't have is a nutritionist and it's just one
24 person and we have everything in the fire department,
25 we have nurses, we have doctors, we have tech folks

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 that handles our cell phones and... etcetera why don't...
3 why... I mean having a nutritionist will be a great
4 idea to have and the other thing is physical
5 equipment. So, we... the department tried other things
6 and in partnership with the foundation by having a, a
7 rowing competition in the department and what that
8 does is... the purpose of engaged team building and to
9 put a, a row machine in every fire house and EMS
10 station. A row machine is a simple non-impact body
11 workout as opposed to running, it reduces pressure on
12 joints so you can still get the same cardiac benefits
13 without stress on your joints. So, the department can
14 use more stuff such as stair masters so the folks can
15 work out on their own time. The Jacob ladder,
16 basically a ladder that climbs up where you're
17 climbing up the... upward, ski ERG and assault runner.
18 An assault runner is basically... is a treadmill
19 without a motor inside, it's curved on the bottom and
20 what that does is it, it promotes proper running and
21 it's, it's cardio benefits and at the end of the day
22 it's a stressful job and what better way to release
23 stress than just have a simple workout whether it's
24 15 minutes a day that's, that's 15 minutes of cardio
25 that, that, that can actually save your life and it

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 ties in with the nutrition as well too. The point is
3 to live long and, and healthy. Let's see and then so
4 what we would like the department... we would like to
5 work with the department continuous... is fire safety
6 education, FDNY CPR in underrepresented neighborhoods
7 and a multilinguistic platform. Currently right now
8 there are fire safety being given throughout the
9 city, there are on average about ten a day but there
10 are less than one that are given in a multilinguistic
11 neighborhood such as an Asian demographic and our
12 society we have the skill set to help the department
13 but we are being pushed back a little bit because it
14 is an overtime issue and we do understand that and we
15 don't want to increase your budget but however...
16 though we're not asking for... to have an event every
17 single day, we simply just want to spread the message
18 because what we notice is when we go out and give our
19 fire safety education seminars we notice that the
20 Asian community are afraid to call 9-1-1, one of the
21 misconceptions is that if you call 9-1-1 there's a
22 fee associated. If we never went out and asked the
23 community that we would never know and that actually
24 leads to, you know lives lost. Let's just say you
25 have a fire or if someone has cardiac... went into

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 cardiac arrest they're afraid to call 9-1-1 because
3 you don't have... they're, they're afraid that there's
4 a fee associated or maybe if they're not here legally
5 so we don't want anyone to get killed, we just put
6 out preventative measures. And he has a... [cross-talk]

7 BENJAMIN CHOU: We as a... well we as a
8 society would like to be that bridge between the
9 community with such a major demographic in the city
10 and the department. We have the... we just need the
11 tools kind of to... we just need the tools to help us
12 do this. The major thing that David was touching on
13 is that the Asian community we... in, in our... in our
14 culture it's, it's big to use incense and candles and
15 a lot of these things pose fire risks and fire... and
16 dangers within... with fire.

17 DAVID LIN: In regard to language skills
18 it's not just one dialect such as mandarin or
19 Cantonese, we have various languages, we have 43
20 different countries under us, so it ranges anywhere
21 between... as you know from Japanese to Pakistanian,
22 Bangladesh and you have every other language in
23 between. Our society we have members that speak these
24 languages, we have members that speak Burmese,
25 Cantonese, Thai, Vietnamese, Korean, Bangladesh, Urdu

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 etcetera and we just... all we want to do is just help
3 the department out with this... with this workshop.
4 There are also currently no Asian outreach liaison
5 within the department, it was a position that I last
6 held in 20... in... between 2016 and 2017 so between 2017
7 and now there aren't... the fire department is not
8 engaging with the Asian community. Two years is a
9 huge time frame and you know it's, it's a
10 relationship that you want to build just like the NCO
11 program NYPD has, you know we just want to engage
12 with the community. We... and the other thing is... the
13 last part is block parties. There's a community
14 engagement event, essentially it is a national night
15 out event from NYPD. Its current location that's been
16 held in a Asian demographic neighborhood, it's in
17 Council Member Koo's district which is in Flushing
18 and it was held there twice, in 2017 and 2018. What
19 we want to do, do is we want to expand that, you know
20 why, why is it just one neighborhood, why can't it be
21 somewhere else, why can't it be in Chinatown,
22 Brooklyn, there are four neighborhoods in Brooklyn;
23 Sunset Park, Bensonhurst, Bay Parkway, and Sheepshead
24 Bay. In Queens there are other areas; Sunnyside,
25 Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, Murry Hill, Bayside and

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 Jamaica. Those areas represent different demographics
3 other than Chinese because they're within Asian
4 communities, there are other areas... other ethnic
5 groups as well. What we would like is instead of just
6 having the standard hot dogs and hamburgers utilize
7 the local businesses so if it's being held in say
8 Sunset Park utilize the local businesses, the local...
9 over there, give back to the small businesses and to
10 our community and what that does is you have people
11 coming in to these block parties and they want to...
12 they're, they're intrigued in trying these new... these
13 foods that they never had before, you know so whether
14 it be a barbeque pork bun or something that's
15 Vietnamese noodles which is like... or Vietnamese ice
16 coffee something like that, that can be part of the
17 block parties that the fire department have instead
18 of giving back... giving to big corporate companies
19 such as Fresh Direct that's where they get all the
20 supplies from, give back to the small businesses and
21 you know and what a better way to showcase another
22 culture is by breaking bread and you know and tasting
23 it so... and we would like to thank the fire emergency
24 management committee for your time and continue
25 fighting for the city. Thank you very much.

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you guys.

3 Thank you very much, appreciate it, there's no
4 questions.

5 DAVID LIN: Thanks.

6 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Seeing no one else
7 here to testify, Oren, do you want... well thank you
8 guys for coming everyone.

9 [gavel]

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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

March 31, 2019